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ALBIN MATHEW

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KERALA ON HIGH ALERT OVER FLOOD, CYCLONE THREATS

With heavy rains pounding Kerala for the past two days, the state govt has started evacuating people from low-lying areas

RAINS LASH STATE, SEA SWALLOWS HOUSES

While non-stop rains have led to waterlogging and uprooting of trees, high waves and sea incursion damaged several houses in coastal hamlets across the state. Chellanam, a coastal village in Ernakulam district, which is already reeling under Covid load with test positivity rate way above the state average, was among the worst-hit as tidal waves entered homes | P5

I.M.D. SOUNDS RED ALERT IN FIVE DISTRICTS

- IMD has sounded red alert in Malappuram, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod projecting extremely heavy rains due to a depression in the Arabian Sea, which is forecast to turn into Cyclone Tauktae. The cyclone is set to affect the entire western coastline right up to Gujarat, where it is likely to hit on May 18

MAY 31

SOUTHWEST MONSOON TO ARRIVE A DAY EARLIER THAN ITS NORMAL ONSET

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

2 bn doses a tall order: Experts

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

A day after the Centre projected the availability of a whopping 2 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines in India during the last five months this year, experts expressed scepticism over the numbers saying they look impractical if not impossible.

India at present produces 2.3 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine daily, which needs to be scaled up six-fold between August and December if the ambitious target is to be met.

Niti Aayog member V K Paul, who also heads the National Covid-19 task force, had on Thursday said 2.16 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines will be be available in the country between August and December, enough to cover nearly 95 crore of India's adult population.

The projected doses include 75 crore of Covishield, 55 crore of Covaxin and 15.6 crore of Sputnik V, whose local production will begin in July.

The estimates also included 30 crore doses by BioE, 5 crore of Zydus Cadila vaccine, 20 crore of Serum Institute of India's Novavax, 10 crore of Bharat Biotech-Washington University's nasal vaccine and 6 crore of Gennova vaccine, all of which are still under various phases of clinical trials. How can their production be ramped up so quickly?

"It is a very ambitious target. I would be surprised if that's achieved, but I am not sure how that is going to happen," said microbiologist and immunologist Sudhanshu Vrati.

According to R Ramakumar, an economist with Tata Institute of Social Sciences, as per the projections, SII will have to raise the production of Covishield by nearly three times per day to meet the target.

"SII is already struggling to meet the promise of 3.3 million doses of Covishield per day by July. How are they going to make 6.4 million doses per day by December?" he asked.

CONTINUED ON: P8

NATIONWIDE	MAY 13	MAY 14
Fresh cases	3,62,727	3,43,144
Recoveries	3,52,181	3,44,776
Deaths	4,120	4,000

JAB-O-METER

TAKE YOUR SHOT

May 13 **19,75,176 doses**

May 14 **10,79,759 doses**

TOTAL DOSES: 18,04,29,261

HARD TIMES

An elderly couple being ferried on a luggage trolly to a train at the Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station in Bengaluru on Friday | VINOD KUMAR

State falling short of 900 tons of O_2 every day; needs 1.2K MT

RANJANI MADHAVAN @ Bengaluru

HOSPITALS and medical centres across Karnataka are consuming a little over 800 metric tonnes of medical oxygen daily while the requirement is about 1,700 MT. The acute shortfall is to the extent of 850-900 MT daily, requiring immediate supply of at least 1,200 MT of medical oxygen to prevent any catastrophe like the Chamarajanagar hospital tragedy.

As per data shared by IAS officer Munish Moudgil, who is in charge of oxygen management, 700.74 kilo litres (800 metric tonne) of medical oxygen were consumed on May 6 and 723.86 kilo litres (826 metric tonne) on May 9. The shortfall on May 9 was 874 metric tonnes (1 kilo litre of oxygen is 1.1417 metric tonne) to reach the consumption requirement of 1,700 MT daily, and it continues daily in that range, he pointed out.

The data collected manually from each deputy commissioner and zone, does not fluctuate much on a daily basis. The highest consumption is in Bengaluru Urban at about 296 MT on May 6 and May 9 each. This is followed by Mysuru with usage of about 49 MT on May 9, Dharwad with 45 MT, Belagavi 28.5 MT, Ballari 27 MT, Bagalkot and Vijayapura with 25 MT each.

In some districts such as Ballari, Bengaluru Rural, Chikkamagaluru, Kalaburagi, Raichur, Ramanagara, Tumakuru, Udupi and Yadgir, the consumption reduced on May 9 from what was used on May 6. Moudgil attributed this decrease to oxygen audit being done by districts and all Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike zone nodal officers for each and every hospital. "We have put in place an elaborate system with every district and BBMP zone having dedicated oxygen nodal officers and camp officers who camp full time at the 57 refilling stations and manufacturers' units. P4

Modi red-flags Covid acceleration in rural areas

MANISH ANAND @ New Delhi

IN his first public comment after the second wave of Covid-19 wreaked havoc, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday sent out a message of hope while warning farmers to stay on guard as the pandemic is fast advancing into rural India.

"This pandemic is spreading fast in rural villages.... Awareness about this among rural people and cooperation of panchayat raj institutions are equally important," he said.

A recent report by SBI's Ecowrap said the share of rural districts in new cases increased to 48.5% in May as compared to 36.8% in March.

However, Modi added, "India is not a nation that loses hope in tough times. This challenge will be overcome with strength and dedication," while interacting with farmers to mark the transfer of the eighth installment of the PM-Kisan Nidhi scheme.

Modi's optimism came at a time when the Centre and the states are sparring over the availability of vaccines, high fatalities and lack of medical support to the affected people. While he refrained from fixing accountability for the lapses that led to the explosive second wave, he claimed the world is facing an invisible enemy and "every government department is working day and night to ease the pain of the nation."

KARNATAKA	MAY 13	MAY 14
Fresh cases	35,297	41,779
Recoveries	34,057	35,879
Deaths	344	373

EXPRESS READ

55L K'taka farmers get ₹985.61 cr under scheme

Bengaluru: Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Friday said that over 55 lakh farmers across the state have received a total financial benefit of ₹985.61 crore directly into their bank accounts as the first instalment for the fiscal, under the PM-KISAN scheme. P3

K'TAKA SEES NEARLY 600 COVID DEATHS AT HOME IN A MONTH

RANJANI MADHAVAN @ Bengaluru

IN a span of just one month, the state has seen 599 Covid-19 patients succumbing at home due to delay in reaching hospitals and shortage of beds, among other factors. This includes 120 deaths between April 13 and April 30 and a sudden spike of 479 deaths between May 1 and May 13, with the highest being reported on May 12, with 88 fatalities, as per the state Health Department data.

Experts and those on the ground who are aiding patients in finding hospital beds, point to the inability to find a hospital bed in time. The number of people needing oxygen support and hospitalisation has increased in direct proportion to the rising number of positive cases, pointed out Dr Nanda Kumar B S, Associate Professor, Community Medicine, M S Ramaiah Medical College.

"Due to scarcity of beds, patients are not reaching hospitals in time. In addition to this, the fatality in the double mutant cases is high due to more virulence. The time taken for the disease severity to increase is shortening from six or eight days to three or four days, including symptoms of pneumonia, ground glassing of lungs, breathlessness, etc," Dr Nanda Kumar said, adding that early diagnosis and treatment will reduce mortality. Ameen E Mudassar, a volunteer with Emergency Response Team that works full time to locate beds, oxygen and Covid-19 drugs for people, said they have seen countless cases of people not being able to find beds in time and therefore, succumbing at home. P4

Family members perform the last rites of a person who succumbed to Covid-19, at an open-air crematorium on the outskirts of Bengaluru recently | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

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Dr Nanda Kumar B S, Associate Professor, Community Medicine, M S Ramaiah Medical College

FROM ACROSS THE STATE

5,98,605
TOTAL ACTIVES CASES

1,10,51,982
TOTAL VACCINATIONS

1,27,105
SAMPLES TESTED ON FRIDAY

Belagavi City Corporation, in association with private companies, is planning a new oxygen plant

The number of containment zones in Dakshina Kannada has increased to 117 from 50 in just three days, as cases increase in the district

With the attacks on health workers and hospital staff on the rise, more policemen will be posted at Mysuru's hospitals

Dr Reddy's Lab rolls out Sputnik V at ₹995 a dose

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

A day after it obtained clearance from the Central Drugs Laboratory (CDL) in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, Dr Reddy's Laboratories soft-launched Sputnik V vaccine by administering the first dose in Hyderabad on Friday.

The company had got the first consignment of the Russian vaccine on May 1 and was awaiting clearance from CDL.

While more consignments of Sputnik V vaccine are expected to arrive in the coming months, supply is expected to commence from Indian manufacturing partners, too. The imported vaccine is priced at an MRP of ₹948 plus 5% GST per dose, which comes to ₹995.40. The price is likely to be lowered when local supply begins.

"With the rising cases in India, vaccination is our most effective tool in our battle against Covid-19. Contributing to the vaccination drive is our biggest priority right now to help Indians stay healthy and safe," said G V Prasad, co-chairman and MD of Dr Reddy's Laboratories.

Meanwhile, Zydus Cadila announced plans to make 5 crore doses of its vaccine, which is under phase-3 clinical trial, by the year-end.

IYC president questioned by Delhi Police

B V Srinivas, who has been applauded for aiding people in distress, was questioned on his supply chain of O_2, medicines and relief materials, drawing anger on social media | P7

Petrol, diesel prices rise again, reach record highs

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices on Friday touched record high levels across the country after rates were increased for the fourth time this week. Petrol price was hiked by 29 paise per litre and diesel by 34 paiweek. Petrol price was hiked by 29 paise per litre and diesel by 34 paise a litre.

Afghan police say Kabul mosque bombing kills 12

Kabul: A bomb ripped through a mosque in northern Kabul during Friday prayers, killing 12 worshippers, and wounding 15, Afghan police said. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. Police said the bomb exploded as prayers had begun.

SERVING CONSTITUENTS

Home Minister's Shiggaon house turned into CCC

ARUNKUMAR HURALIMATH @ Hubballi

AS the state grapples on many fronts in the battle against the pandemic, several political leaders are taking the initiative to set up Covid Care Centres at their own cost. The gravity of the situation can be gauged from the fact that none other than Karnataka Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai has turned his private residence in Shiggaon of Haveri district into a CCC.

The move comes after the number of Covid-19 cases started increasing in his home district Haveri. Bommai handed over his house to the local administration in order to overcome the shortage of beds in the government and private hospitals, and it was converted into a CCC in no time.

Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai inspects the Covid Care Centre at his house in Shiggaon on Friday | EXPRESS

As many as 50 beds have been set up in the front yard of his residence with necessary medical facilities. Soon, 50 oxygen concentrators will be installed near each bed to provide oxygen to Covid-19 patients. The oxygen concentrators are expected to arrive in the next two days.

On Friday, after inspecting facilities at his house, Bommai said a team of medical professionals, including government and private doctors and nurses, will be deployed at the CCC to attend on patients round the clock. Bommai has now shifted to his residence in Hubballi along with his family.

An official from the district administration noted that most of the beds in the taluk hospital, which are attached with oxygen cylinders, have been occupied and it has become difficult to find such beds in private hospitals too. Dr P H Hanumantappa, Chief Medical Officer, general hospital, Shiggaon, said those who are recovering in the hospital will be shifted to the CCC and treated there. "The CCC, with oxygen concentrators, will help accommodate more patients in the hospital and also reduce the death rates in the taluk," he said.

It is said to be the first instance in the country where a minister's residence has been converted into a CCC.

State Congress leaders offer to procure vaccines at ₹100 crore

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AFTER offering to pay for the tickets of migrant workers who were heading back home during the lockdown last year, Congress leaders in the state on Friday said they are willing to procure Covid-19 vaccines for the people. Karnataka Pradesh Congress committee president D K Shivakumar said ₹100 crore, which includes ₹10 crore from the party funds as a commitment towards the fight against Covid-19, and ₹90 crore from MP/MLA/MLC local area development funds, public donations and fund-raisers, etc., will be set aside to procure vaccines directly from manufacturers.

KPCC president DK Shivakumar and former CM Siddaramaiah at the Congress office in Bengaluru on Friday

The offer came with a request that the State and Central governments allow the Congress party to procure vaccines directly. The initiative is being seen as an attempt to put both the State and Centre on the mat over the vaccination policy.

"The government has miserably failed to protect the people and vaccinate them. Hence, our party MPs, MLAs and MLCs, who are 95 in number, have decided to donate at least Rs 1 crore each to procure vaccines," said former Chief Minister and Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah. The decision comes barely two days after the State Government suspended the vaccination drive for those aged between 18-44 due to shortage in supplies. P5

ALMANAC TODAY

Saturday : 15/05/2021 • Year: Plava • Ayana: Uttharayana • Ritu: Vasantha • Masa: Vaishala • Paksha: Shukla • Tithi: Chaturthi (Whole Day) • Nakshatra: Ardra (Whole Day) • Moon in Kataka Rashi • Rahukaala: 09:00 am to 10:30am • Gulikakala: 06:00 am to 07:30 am • Yamaganda: 01:49 pm to 03:26 pm

WEATHER — MIN 23°C | MAX 28°C

FORECAST Showers late. Overcast

Sunrise 5.54 am | Sunset 6.37 pm | Moonrise 8.26 am | Moonset 8.42 pm

BBMP increases triaging centres to 26 in city

To set up 60 in first phase; Patients can now walk in and seek help

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

NOW if there is a delay from 1912 helpline or Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in your tele-triaging, you can walk into the nearest triaging centre for help and also for direct admission to covid care centres.

The BBMP on Friday increased the number of triaging centres from eight, one in each zone, to 26, and it plans to set up 60 centres in the first phase. The additional centres came up after citizens complained to the BBMP that the number of centres was less and they lacked proper facilities. "We have not just corrected the anomalies in the first eight, but also increased them to 26. A nodal officer has been placed in each centre who is also the ward committee nodal secretary. A mobile phone has been kept in each centre for citizens to seek help. With this, the need to go through CHBMS portal for a bed in CCCs has been removed. Citizens can directly walk in to triaging centres or CCCs and based on their condition, bed will be allocated. We are also working on booking beds at hospitals directly from triaging centres soon," BBMP Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta said on Friday.

He was speaking to the media after taking feedback from citizens. He said that the government has been requested to ask private hospitals and PHANA to ensure that all hospitals, irrespective of their bed capacity, to register on the bed allocation portal. They are also being told to give unoccupied beds to government as cases are rising. Of the 30,000 beds, 12,754 are with the government now.

On the rising complaints of discharge procedure taking 8-10 hours, Gupta said that hospitals and nodal officers have been told to create discharge lounges, where discharges are done within two hours and new patients are admitted in time. On Thursday, 1,300 people were discharged, 1,048 new bed bookings were made and the rest were stepped up in-house.

> **The technical advisory committee has told us to create 60 triaging centres. The remaining will come up as more facilities arrive**
>
> D Randeep, nodal officer, triaging

Another BBMP official said, "These walk-in triaging centres have been created to help patients whose condition would have worsened and they were not getting response from 1912 helpline or zonal war rooms. We are also working on getting doctors from these centres to visit people's homes for physical triaging."

Nodal officer, triaging, D Randeep said, "The technical advisory committee has told us to create 60 triaging centres. The remaining will come up as more facilities arrive. Ayush Hospitals and other places where beds are available will also be turned into triaging centres."

Another 240 tons of O_2 to arrive by trains today

Bengaluru: The Second and Third Oxygen Express trains will arrive in Bengaluru on Saturday carrying a total of 240 tons of Liquid Medical Oxygen for Karnataka. Each train is carrying six cryogenic containers. According to an official release, the second train will reach the Inland Container Depot at Whitefield at 5 am. It is on its way from Kalinganagar in Odisha with 120 tonnes of LMO. It began its trip at 3.10 am on Friday. The third Oxygen Express to Karnataka was loaded from Tatanagar, in Jharkhand. It is expected to reach ICD-Whitefield at 5 pm on Saturday with 120 tonnes of LMO. It began its trip from Tatanagar at 12:40 pm on Friday, the release said.

PRAYERS FOR SAFETY

A group of children offers namaaz on the occassion of Eid ul Fitr in Bengaluru on Friday | EXPRESS

Fewer BMTC buses to ply to airport

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE BMTC has further reduced the number of buses being operated to the Kempegowda International Airport due to poor patronage. On account of the lockdown, only six Vayu Vajra buses were being run between the Kempegowda Bus Station in Majestic and the airport daily, while buses from all other locations in the city had been cancelled.

"We were running six buses which operated 22 trips daily. They have now been reduced to four, which run only 15 trips. Each trip permits only 22 passengers on board owing to the need to maintain social distancing. However, we are getting only five or six passengers per trip," a senior BMTC official told TNIE.

Pointing out that the average occupancy figure was only 25 per cent, the official said they were closely monitoring it. "There has been a huge dip in flyers and there is a fear of travelling. If this trend continues, we will reduce our trips further," he added.

LAKE REJUVENATION

In a big relief, K&C Valley STP gets going

S LALITHA @Bengaluru

AFTER many decades of waste water between Majestic and Koramangala flowing through the storm water drain, a sewerage network that would transport it all to a treatment plant has been readied by the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB). The Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), located upstream of the Bellandur Lake releases treated water into the lake, rejuvenating it to some extent.

The project was to be in place by July last year, but labour shortage amidst the first wave of the pandemic delayed it as work stopped for three months.

Elaborating on the Koramangala & Challaghatta Valley (K & C) project, BWSSB Chairman N Jayaram told TNIE, "BWSSB began the work a year ago. We laid a 16-km network from Shanthala Silks (in Majestic) to Bellandur Lake. For the last 70 years, sewage was being released into the SWD and lakes. It has finally been stopped. To adhere to the deadline laid down by the National Green Tribunal with regard to Bellandur Lake, the staff worked 24x7. The plant

The STP near Bellandur lake | EXPRESS

which can treat up to 150 million litres per day (MLD) of sewage water became operational recently."

To facilitate this, an Intermediate STP with a capacity of 210 MLD that pumps sewage water up to the KC Valley STP, was launched by the CM at the National Games Village at Koramangala in September 2020. The project, which aims to generate sludge from which power can be generated, is yet to be readied, Jayaram said.

When the minor irrigation department puts in place pipelines, the treated water can be taken to Anekal taluk, he added.

BWSSB Waste Water Management Chief Engineer K C Gangadhar said, "The completion of the work by us will allow the BBMP to start its K100 Water Ways project."

ON THE HORIZON

Monsoon to arrive in City by first week of June

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

AFTER months of scorching heat, it's time to look forward to rainy days. The South-West monsoon, which is expected to hit the Kerala coast by May 31, will reach Bengaluru by June 7, according to state officials from the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

However, there could be a difference of 3-4 days, depending on the weather systems, they pointed out.

The Director In-charge of IMD Bengaluru, C S Patil, told The New Indian Express that under normal circumstances, after the monsoon touches the Kerala coast, it takes about 5-7 days to reach Bengaluru and can be expected by June 7. Sometimes, there are formation of weather systems due to which the arrival of monsoon is either advanced or delayed.

Dark clouds dominate the evening sky in Bengaluru on Friday | VINOD KUMAR T

Forecast verification over the years

YEAR	ACTUAL ONSET DATE	FORECAST ONSET DATE
2016	June 8	June 7
2017	May 30	May 30
2018	May 29	May 29
2019	June 8	June 6
2020	June 1	June 5

But, at present, the rainfall, formation of systems and other patterns are favourable for the timely setting-in of the monsoon, he said.

According to the India Meteorological Department bulletin released on Friday, the monsoon onset progress over the Andaman Sea is May 22. At present, a depression is formed over Lakshadweep area and its neighbourhood.

The depression is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm during the next 24 hours and is very likely to move north-northwest and reach the Gujarat coast by May 18.

This cross-Equitorial flow is likely to strengthen and deepen over the Bay of Bengal from May 20 and rainfall is likely to activate around May 21.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

15th May: Let's work out today's basic numerology. It's really quite simple. It's the 15th. To investigate further, if we add 1 plus 5, we make 6. Now, the number 6 is associated with harmony in all its forms: beautiful music, perfect friendships, peaceful environments and nature at its best. What else could we wish for?

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Although the weekend looks relatively relaxed, you can never forget that you're an Aries. The long-term outlook is stormy, and recent disputes could soon come to a point of no return. It is time to face up to the truth on a number of personal issues, and do what you can to recreate a more harmonious situation.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
The current energetic planetary conditions may be to your liking, but in reality you're ready to enter a less stressful phase of existence. Whether this will come to pass or not is another matter and, as the weeks pass, the range of options open to you will increase.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
As there's an emotional Moon shining today, it's unlikely you'll have any real chance to relax. It's much better to keep on the go, but try to maintain your sense of self-preservation and avoid needless risks. Watch out if you're handling cash - you could be dreaming of great riches but about to make a blunder!

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Tense planetary alignments could work to your advantage if only you are able to concentrate your efforts. If you ignore routine interests now, you may find that next week's plans unravel. The best advice, therefore, is to do the minimum necessary to keep your life ticking over - and spare time for a little fun.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
When the Moon supports your sign, as happens today, you tend to feel that the world is on your side. You'll find that a more open and flexible approach will deal with most routine problems. Even if you travel for pleasure, the results could be a shift of direction in a major long-term ambition.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
Today's stars will bring a boost to your energy, but only if you're in a receptive mood. Personal relationships require careful handling and you might have to put someone else's interests first, at least for today. Your financial sense is more shrewd than ever, so you are in an excellent position to pick up a bargain.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
It's been a week of uncertainty at work in spite of your undoubted achievements, and you're in need of a rest. However, domestic chores require attention and partners will keep you on the go. Yet, for once, you know best. If partners don't realise this, that's their problem!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
Today's stars continue unsettling trends, but only in a mild sense. Actually, you can enjoy the fact that the future is up for grabs. Yet you must never give way to complacency, otherwise you'll lose control. The moment you relax, there'll be a minor crisis to cope with.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
Domestically, you may get the feeling that everything is working against you. However, you'll be surprised how soon partners come round to your way of thinking, with a little tact and sweet talk. Children and younger relations need a steadying hand, and you're just the person to provide it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
Restless conditions are bound to affect every area of your life, and you're not in an ideal position to withstand disturbances to your routine. Make the most of every positive opportunity and try to see the present time as an excellent opportunity to deal with long-standing irritations.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
Money matters should be treated delicately, as mistakes could be costly. If you're concerned about a particular transaction, there's much to be gained from seeking a second, more experienced, opinion. An emotional relationship could be hard work but every extra effort will be worth it.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
You may be gearing up for big changes, but at all costs don't allow yourself to be drawn into arguments that are of other people's making. Stick to your own course and do what you know is right. If you see the chance to make a profit, go all out - there's no point in being sentimental.

THE PHANTOM

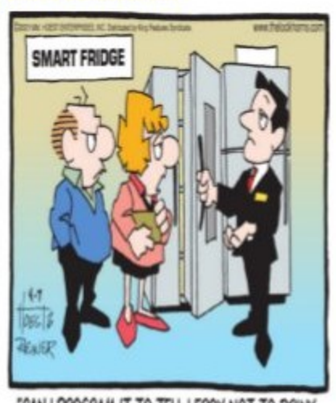
IS IT HIM?
IF THE UNKNOWN COMMANDER HAD NOT SENT HIS MAN, THE CHIEF AND I MIGHT BOTH BE IN A RHODIAN CELL TONIGHT...
PERHAPS DEPRIVED OF OUR VERY LIVES...
DISAPPEARED FOREVER INTO THE UNMARKED GROUND WHERE FASCISTS HIDE THEIR MURDERED OPPONENTS...
Falk

HI AND LOIS

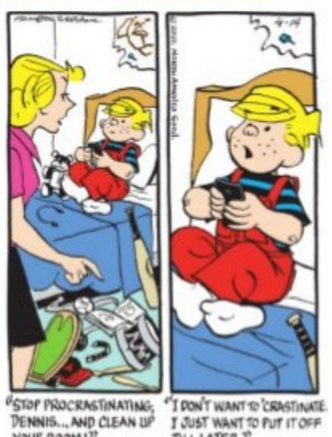
BEETLE BAILEY

BLONDIE

LOCKHORNS



DENNIS THE MENACE



SUDOKU

Medium: Test your number crunching skills with our unique puzzle

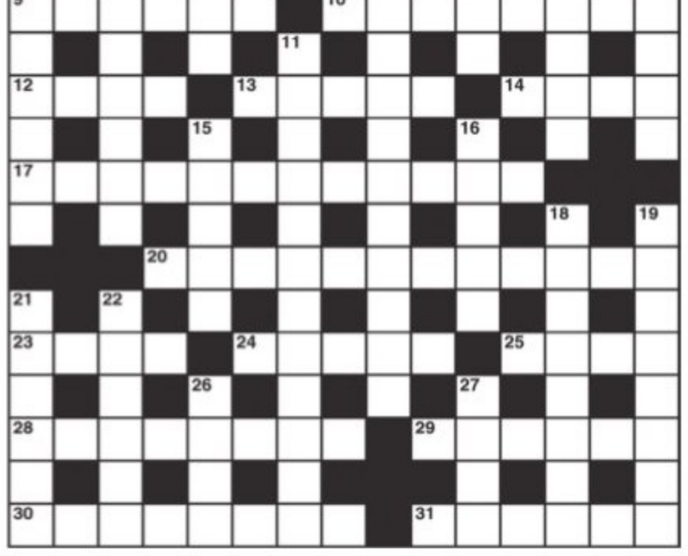
Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

			2					
	3						1	
	2	5	1	8				4
2	1			5		7	9	
	7		9	2	1		3	
	9	3		6			4	1
1				7	4	9	2	
	4						6	
					6			

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

3	6	7	2	5	8	1	9	4
8	5	4	7	9	1	6	3	2
2	9	1	6	3	4	7	5	8
1	2	6	3	7	9	4	8	5
4	3	5	8	2	6	9	1	7
7	8	9	1	4	5	2	6	3
5	7	8	9	6	2	3	4	1
9	1	2	4	8	3	5	7	6
6	4	3	5	1	7	8	2	9

CROSS WORD



ACROSS

1 Loose draft I put in order (6)
4 Continentals involved in fracas (8)
9 A speaker who is skilled at splitting alternatives (6)
10 Can keep going (8)
12 Repeat after some reflection (4)
13 Many a man gets her (5)
14 A man naturally embraces her (4)
17 The price of a suit ? (5,7)
20 But it's not what pyromaniacs suffer from (7,5)
23 With each twist it hurts (4)
24 Sailor has half a bottle with a male superior (5)
25 Mineral used in ancient alchemy (4)
28 Transaction which is without credit (4,4)
29 A fabric that is woven as and when one pleases (2,4)
30 Submitted to the Spanish guard (8)
31 A small cob perhaps (6)

DOWN

1 A lovable disposition may be most important (5,3)
2 Descriptive of the rasher drivers? (4,4)
3 It's bad form not to (4)
5 An aimless order? (4,2,6)
6 This month in an abbreviated way (4)
7 Progressed quickly in skill, being thorough (6)
8 Observes a western board game (6)
11 A fair swimmer? (7,5)
15 A fine meal (5)
16 Nautical hazard means one takes in sail (5)
18 Profession that calls for men with high qualifications (8)
19 A small band or two allowed (8)
21 The organisation of a party (6)
22 Selected another name for Korea (6)
26 It's a mixed drink (4)
27 Postpone a visit (4)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Facet, 4 Brevity, 8 Art, 9 Architect, 10 Iterate, 11 Idols, 13 Grille, 15 Inlets, 18 Arena, 19 Thimble, 21 Good habit, 23 Alp, 24 Endorse, 25 Wedge.

Down: 1 Fearing, 2 Catherine, 3 Tiara, 4 Backer, 5 Edition, 6 Ire, 7 Yetis, 12 Overboard, 14 Leather, 16 Steeple, 17 Stable, 18 Angle, 20 In tow, 22 Old.

JUMBLE By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MEEEC

RYFTO

RRYATO

SKOPNE

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I think we should choose to live there for a year. Then we can either re-sign a lease or move on.
I like that better than buying right now.
FOR SALE OR LEASE
3/18
THEY LEASED A HOME INSTEAD OF BUYING ONE BECAUSE IT WAS THEIR ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

"_____ - _____"

ANSWERS TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S: **Jumbles:** GAVEL HAIRY GOSSIP ENTICE
ANSWER: They got to have the Saint Patrick's Day parade after town officials gave the — GREEN LIGHT

BBMP and health department have asked people not to go for the second dose of Covishield from May 15 if a beneficiary has not completed 12-16 weeks from the first dose. It stated that as recommended by the Central Government, a person has to complete the mandatory time gap before going for vaccination. This revised time interval is applicable only to Covishield and not to Covaxin, it stated

COVID SPREAD

Virus fear over visits by micro finance agents

Villagers approach authorities to put stop on deposit collection for now

KARTHIK K K @ Mysuru

AT a time when the Covid second wave is pummeling the rural hinterlands of Karnataka, the visits by agents of micro and private finance companies to the doorstep of borrowers to collect deposits have been keeping the residents in a tizzy for fear of the virus spread.

Following the announcement of the lockdown, officials have been insisting that people working in Bengaluru and other parts of the state return to their villages. But the frequent visits by the agents are keeping them worried.

"Most of the microfinance and private finance companies are sending their pigmy collectors or agents to the doorstep in our villages. The virus is already playing havoc among rural folks and the frequent visits by the agents are further putting people at risk of contracting the virus.

> **The frequent visits by the agents are further putting people at risk of contracting the virus. Most of these agents ... might be carriers of the virus, which has forced people to reach out to the panchayat heads to put a stop to this**
>
> Raghava, resident of Rangasamudra

Most of these agents are assigned to make recoveries from 10-15 villages and might be carriers of the virus, which has forced people to reach out to the panchayat heads or elected representatives to put a stop to this," said Raghava, a resident of Rangasamudra village.

Recently, when Gundlupet MLA Niranjan Kumar paid a visit and inspected containment zones, villagers of Bannitalapura in the taluk called upon him requesting that he direct the police not to allow anyone to come to the doorstep for payment collection.

Stop visists till lockdown ends: Mysuru DC

Mysuru Deputy Commissioner Rohini Sindhuri, who was informed about the matter, has convened a meeting with officials and directed all the tahsildars in the district to ensure that microfinance agents are not made to visit houses till the end of the lockdown.

55 lakh farmers get Rs 985.61 cr under PM-KISAN

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

OVER 55 lakh farmers across Karnataka received Rs 985.61 crore directly into their bank accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme on Friday.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the 8th installment of financial benefit under PM-KISAN. More than 55 lakh farmers across Karnataka received Rs 985.61 crore directly into their bank accounts," Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa said. The PM released the fresh installment of the scheme via video conference.

The PM-KISAN scheme was implemented in Karnataka from February 1, 2019. From March 2019 to March 2021, 55.06 lakh farmers received a financial assistance of Rs 6,936 crore from the Centre, a statement issued by the government stated. Under the scheme, Rs 6,000 is givien to farmers in three installments of Rs 2,000 each.

The state government provides an additional Rs 4,000 as financial assistance to farmers, given in two installments of Rs 2,000 each. The state government has provided Rs 2891.70 crore to farmers under the scheme so far. Karnataka has done the highest percentage of Aadhaar enabled transactions under the scheme, the statement said.

On Friday, the PM released over 19,000 crore to over 9.5 crore farmers in different states. Under the scheme Rs 1.15 lakh crore has been released to farmers till date, the statement added.

BJP MLC questions delay in relief for Ch'nagar victims

APOLOGISE TO MYSURU: SINDHURI

Mysuru: In the wake of a High Court-appointed panel clearing the Mysuru district administration of accusations of delay in supplying oxygen to the Chamarajanagara district hospital that led to the death of 24 Covid patients, Mysuru Deputy Commissioner Rohini Sindhuri said that those who made such accusations should apologise to the city. Speaking to reporters in the city on the sidelines of an event to mark Basava Jayanti, the DC said that the accusations against her eventually turned into an attempt to taint entire Mysuru. "The allegations were baseless. Those who attempted to hold Mysuru responsible for the deaths should now apologise to the city," she said adding that since taking charge seven months ago, she has been facing personal attacks.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru

IN a no-holds-barred attack against the State Government on Chamarajanagar oxygen tragedy, BJP MLC A H Vishwanth on Friday questioned the delay in releasing compensation to the families of victims even after a high court directive. He said that Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa could have consoled the families of victims by announcing the compensation. "Stop all PWD works and divert money for the compensation," he demanded.

He criticised Union Minister DV Sadananda Gowda and BJP National General Secretary CT Ravi for their comments on the high court's intervention in pandemic affairs. He said that since the comment was made by the Union minister, it reflects the stand of the government. "It is a comment against the court. There is a law of the land and it cannot be violated," he said.

Police keep vigil outside the Chamrajanagar district hospital in the aftermath of the tragedy in which 24 patients died due to lack of oxygen | EXPRESS

Justifying the court-initiated inquiry, he said that the report by the committee absolved Mysuru of any wrongdoing. "If the probe had been done by officials, they would have said only three deaths occurred at the hospital and blamed the administration of both districts," he said.

Taranath, Kasturirangan to get Basavashree awards

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chitradurga

CLASSICAL musician Pandit Rajeev Taranath and space scientist Dr K Kasturirangan will receive the prestigious Basavashree award for 2019 and 2020, respectively, announced Murugha Mutt pontiff Dr Shivamurthy Murugha Sharanaru on Friday.

Dr K Kasturirangan

Pt Rajeev Taranath

The seer, on the occasion of Basava Jayanti celebrations, said Pt Rajeev Taranath, born in Bangalore on October 17, 1932, gave his first public performance when he was just nine years old. He was singing for All India Radio before he was 20. He was trained in Sarod under Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Pt Ravishankar, Nikhil Banerjee, Aashish Khan and Annapoornadevi.

Dr K Kasturirangan, who served as chairman of ISRO and Space Commission, has been credited with launching various satellites. He was instrumental in making India a major space power.

The award includes a cash component of Rs 5 lakh and a plaque. The pontiff said that the date for the presentation of the awards will be announced post-lockdown.

LOCKDOWN

Disabled staff exempted from court duty

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

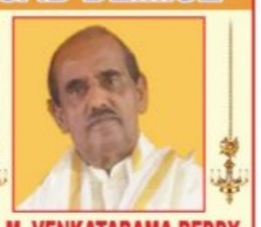
THE Karnataka High Court has exempted physically-disabled and visually-impaired officials working at the district judiciary in the state from attending office during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

Registrar General (Incharge) T G Shivashankare Gowda stated in the notification that the State Commissioner for Rights of Persons with Disabilities-Karnataka has requested that physically-disabled and visually-impaired staffers be exempted from attending office during the pandemic. Therefore, an exemption has been made.

Meanwhile, the High Court has declared Saturday (May 15) as a holiday for district and trial courts and the cases listed on this day will be re-listed on Monday.

The Registrar General said the holiday was declared in view of taking remedial measures for combating the Covid threat.

SAD DEMISE



Dr. M. VENKATARAMA REDDY
(07.05.1953 - 13.05.2021)

We deeply regret to inform his sad demise on 13.05.2021. We pray Lord Almighty that the soul of deceased may rest in peace.
Deeply mourned by: Smt. Chikka Kempamma & Meshtrappa Reddy Family Members, Bande Bommasandra, Bangalore.

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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. 15/MYS/2021 of 07-05-2021

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Sub Work - I :	Rs. 41,74,568/-

Collection of Hydro Metrological Data for Bridge No. 597 (4 x 45.72 + 8 x 24.40m Girder - Netravati Bridge) at Km 163/300-700 on Hassan - Mangaluru Section. **Sub Work - II :** Collection of Hydro Metrological Data for Bridge No. 28 (3 x 18.30m Girder - Yagachi) at Km 9/800-10/000 on Hassan - Mangaluru Section. **Sub Work - III :** Collection of Hydro Metrological Data for Bridge No. 90 (16 x 18.30m + 2 x 6.10m Girder - Tungabhadra River Bridge) at Km 339/9-17 on Harihar - Hubballi Section. **Sub Work - IV :** Collection of Hydro Metrological Data for Bridge No. 706A (1 x 45.72m - Lokapavani) at Km 114/100-200 on Mysuru - Bengaluru Section.

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 28-05-2021**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Divisional Railway Manager, Works Mysuru
PUB/44/AAS/PRB/SWR/2021-22

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Phone 0471 2529400. www.rgcb.res.in

Tender No. RGCB/PUR/21/18 May 10, 2021

TENDER NOTICE INVITING ONLINE BIDS

Item: SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF MICRO RAMAN SPECTROMETER & ACCESSORIES.

Last Date and Time of Submission of Bids (Technical and Price Bids): **JUNE 14, 2021, 15.00 Hrs**. Date and Time of Opening of Technical Bids: **JUNE 14, 2021, 15.30 Hrs.**

Tender forms can be downloaded from our e-Tendering Portal (**https://rgcb.euniwizarde.com**). Interested Bidders shall enrol on the e-Procurement module of the portal **https://rgcb.euniwizarde.com** by clicking on the link "Bidder Enrolment". Enrolment Charges and Tender Processing Fee as applicable shall be payable to the Application Service Provider (ASP), M/S. ITI Ltd., Bangalore.

Sd/-,
Controller of Administration

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD.
(A Government of India Undertaking)

Tender No.: KR/KW/OL/W/2021/05-CB

The Konkan Railway Corporation Limited has invited following open tender on **ireps.gov.in** system. **Name of the Work:** Protective works inside Pernem tunnel between KM 384/6-7 for 63 mtrs. length under SEN/MAO section. Priority-I Work (Excluding ongoing work portion). **Cost of the Work:** ₹ 249.07 Lakhs Excluding GST. **Closing Date & Time:** 04/06/2021 at 15:00 Hrs. For further details, contact Office of Sr. Regional Engineer, Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., Karwar. For more details visit **(https://www.ireps.gov.in)**

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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KSHIP A World Bank Assisted Project Karnataka State Highways Improvement Project

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
KARNATAKA STATE HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
(KARNATAKA PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT)
1st Floor, PWD ANNEX Building, K. R. Circle, Bengaluru – 560 001
Tele: +91 80 2212 6758/59/60/61 Fax: +91 80 2222 9666
E-mail: piukship@gmail.com

No: KSHIP/PIU/SE-2/RSC-1 & 2 /2021-22/281 Date: 12.05.2021

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

1. Appointment of Road Safety Consultants (RSC-I) for the PWD North and North East zone Roads in the State of Karnataka (PACKAGE – 1) under KSHIP-III Project.
2. Appointment of Road Safety Consultants (RSC-II) for the PWD South and Central Zone Roads in the State of Karnataka (PACKAGE – 2) under KSHIP-III Project.

A Consulting Services Recruitment Notice (CSRN) is published on ADB's website along with the Terms of Reference. The website includes a link to standard expression of interest (EOI) form that firms can download, filled out and submit online through ADB's website www.adb.org.

(1) Interested Bidders are requested to (i) Register with ADB's CMS (Consultant Management System) at http://www.adb.org/Consulting/cms.asp (ii) Go to http://csrn.adb.org (iii) Click on "INDIA" (iv) Find the captioned project name and click on "view" (v) Click on submit 'EOI' (vi) Follow the instructions. **(2)** Interested Bidders may contact this office from **10.30 to 17.30 hours** on working days, if required, for further information.

Sd/-
PROJECT DIRECTOR
PIU, KSHIP, Bengaluru

DIPR/DDU/RO. No. 371/2021-22

COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS GROUP

STAY CALM STAY SAFE

Manage your fear and anxiety during the novel coronavirus outbreak. Effectively use your time at home by doing yoga, meditation, exercise and self-learning. Most importantly, take this opportunity to do all the things you wanted to at home, adhering to COVID protocols all the while.
Stay calm and stay healthy.

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THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

COVID-19

04 BENGALURU SATURDAY 15.05.2021

TRACKING COVID-19

SPEED AND RISE OF COVID-19 CASES IN KARNATAKA

41,779 CASES REPORTED TODAY

35,297 CASES REPORTED YESTERDAY

TALLY STANDS AT

TODAY	21,30,267
YESTERDAY	20,88,488

DEATHS

TODAY	YESTERDAY
373	344

DISCHARGES

TODAY	YESTERDAY
35,879	34,057

ACTIVE CASES

	TODAY	YESTERDAY
	5,98,605	5,93,078

POSITIVITY RATE
TODAY 7.70%
YESTERDAY 7.58%

MORTALITY RATE
TODAY 0.98%
YESTERDAY 0.99%

RECOVERY RATE
TODAY 70.90%
YESTERDAY 70.60%

The first Covid-19 case in Karnataka was reported on March 8, 2020. Since then until May 14, 2021, a total of 21,30,267 cases have been reported in 1 year and 64 days...

1,10,51,982 Number of people vaccinated across the state

VACCINATION DRIVE STATUS

Health care workers 1st dose	6,96,565
Health care workers 2nd dose	4,57,421
Frontline workers 1st dose	4,82,712
Frontline workers 2nd dose	1,90,593
Age 18-45 1st dose	1,07,478
Age 45st dose	73,68,421
Age 45 2nd dose	17,48,792

DISTRICT-WISE COVID CASES

LAST 24 HOURS

14,316 BENGALURU URBAN

707 BENGALURU RURAL

Bagalakote: 773	Chamarajanagara: 713	Dakshina Kannada: 1,215	Hassan: 792	Kolar: 306	Raichuru: 1,063	Udupi: 1,219
Ballari: 2,421	Chikkaballapura: 676	Davanagere: 581	Haveri: 292	Koppala: 495	Ramanagara: 459	Uttara Kannada: 787
Belagavi: 1,592	Chikkamagaluru: 835	Dharwad: 591	Kalaburagi: 929	Mandya: 1,385	Shivamogga: 1,045	Vijayapura: 444
Bidar: 223	Chitradurga: 314	Gadag: 1,339	Kodagu: 539	Mysuru: 2,340	Tumakuru: 2,668	Yadagir: 683

COVAXIN UNIT TO COME UP IN MALUR: DyCM

■ Bharat Biotech facility will start ops soon ■ Will support firms investing in K'taka to produce vax: Ashwath Narayan

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru, Kolar

BHARAT Biotech, manufacturer of Covaxin, will set up a vaccine manufacturing unit at Malur Industrial Area in Kolar district, Deputy Chief Minister Dr CN Ashwath Narayan, who also leads the State Covid Task Force, said on Friday.

The construction work has already begun and the plant is expected to commence operations soon, he told reporters.

"The State Government has approved the project. Malur was selected because it is close to Bengaluru and has good railway connectivity," he added.

The State Government will extend support to any pharmaceutical company that comes forward to set up vaccine-manufacturing units in the State, he said.

He told TNIE that Bharat Biotech already has a unit in Malur where it produces other drugs and vaccines. The new unit will manufacture Covaxin and the initiative is also supported by the Union Government.

As per NITI Ayog estimates, 40 crore doses of the vaccine will be manufactured in the country by August and as of now, 19 crore doses have come out of the production line. The manufacturing unit in Malur will help the country fight Covid better, he said.

Kolar Deputy Commissioner Dr Selvamani said the district administration will extend all support to the unit.

Malur MLA KY Nanje Gowda said residents of Malur will be happy if the vaccination unit is set up in the industrial area as it will also help generate employment to the local youth. Health Commissioner Dr KV Thrilok Chandra commented that it will be a boon not just for the district, but for the entire state.

100-BED HOSPITALS IN EVERY CONSTITUENCY

Depuy Chief Minister Dr CN Ashwath Narayan said that with experts warning of a Covid third wave, the government is planning to set up 100-bed hospitals with oxygen and ICU facilities at every Assembly constituency in the State.

ICMR advises on how to fight Mucormycosis or Black Fungus

Several states, including Karnataka, are seeeing a rise in the number of cases of Mucormycosis or Black Fungus, especially among Covid-19 recovered patients. The infection is being seen generally two weeks post-Covid recovery. While doctors have warned on indiscriminate use of steroids during early treatment of Covid, the Indian Council Medical Research (ICMR) has released an evidence-based advisory to screen, diagnose and manage Mucormycosis

WHAT IS MUCORMYCOSIS?

It is a fungal infection that mainly affects people who are on medication for other health problems that reduces their ability to fight environmental pathogens

SYMPTOMS

- Pain and redness around eyes and/or nose
- Fever, Headache, Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Bloody vomits
- Altered mental status

WHEN TO SUSPECT

- Sinusitis-nasal blockade or congestion
- Nasal discharge (blackish/bloody)
- Local pain on the cheek bone
- One sided facial pain, numbness or swelling
- Toothache
- Blurred or double vision with pain
- Chest pain, worsening of respiratory symptoms

WHO ARE AT RISK

- Those with uncontrolled diabetes mellitus
- Immunosuppression by steroids
- Prolonged ICU stay
- Comorbidities-post transplant/malignancy

WHAT TO DO

- Control hyperglycemia
- Monitor blood glucose level post covid-19 discharge
- Use steroid judiciously-correct timing, dose and duration
- Use clean, sterile water for humidifiers during oxygen therapy
- Use antibiotics/ antifungals judiciously

DONT'S

- Do not miss warning signs and symptoms
- Do not consider all cases with blocked nose as this
- Do not hesitate to seek aggressive interventions
- Tests like KOH staining, microscopy, culture, MALDITOF can be done to detect fungal etiology
- Don't lose crucial time by hesitating to initiate treatment

EXPLAINING MOVE

O_2 supply to individuals restricted: State to HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE State Government on Friday told the Karnataka High Court that it has issued guidelines, directing refillers and manufacturers not to supply medical oxygen to individuals and to cater to the needs of only hospitals

IN THE HC

The circular issued by the government was placed before the special division bench of Chief Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka and Justice Aravind Kumar during a hearing of a batch of PILs on Covid. The circular directed deputy commissioners and the BBMP to create a buffer stock of 10 per cent of their daily consumption at their disposal to meet any emergency requirements. The buffer stock should be locally created within seven days and should be in control of the DC, the government said.

Nine districts in the State do not have bottling units, and they are dependent on their neighbouring districts for oxygen supplies. They should create a buffer stock of 20 per cent of their daily consumption to meet any emergency, the circular read.

These guidelines are issued under Section 24 of the Disaster Management Act and Section 4 of the Karnataka Epidemic Diseases Act. Any violation of these guidelines will attract penalties.

At 36K, Karnataka records highest discharges for a day

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA on Friday recorded its highest single-day Covid discharges at 35,879, although it also witnessed 41,779 fresh cases added to the tally.

With the number of discharges showing a robust increase over the last few days, the state's recovery rate too has started improving. For the last three days, the State has recorded an increased recovery rate after weeks of steady decline. The recovery rate has now reached 70.90 per cent, up from 70.16 per cent on May 12 and 70.60 per cent on Thursday.

While Friday's was the highest number of discharged, May 8 recorded the second highest at 34,881 and May 12 saw the third highest at 34,752. The total number of discharged patients has so far crossed the 15-lakh-mark and stands at 15,10,557.

An empty road during the Covid lockdown in Bengaluru on Friday | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

But the State's mortality figures continue to be high. With an addition of 373 deaths on Friday, Karnataka crossed the 21,000 mark and stood at 21,085, although the mortality rate has remained below 1 per cent at 0.98.

Bengaluru, which has the highest toll in the state at 9,246, has a case fatality rate of 0.89 per cent.

The State's Covid tally crossed the 21-lakh mark on Friday at 21,30,267, up from 20,88,448 on Thursday, while active cases are still very high at 5,98,605, up from 5,93,078 the previous day. Bengaluru alone has an active caseload of 3,60,862, which increased from 3,59,565 on Thursday.

DRDO develops system to reduce risk for health workers

ENS @ Bengaluru

THE Defence Research and Development Organisation has developed a system that is said to reduce the workload of healthcare providers as well as their exposure to Covid patients by eliminating the need to routinely measure and manually adjust oxygen flow to patients. Called Oxycare System, the government is looking at procuring 1.5 lakh of these units through the PM-CARES fund at Rs 322.5 crore.

DRDO has transferred the technology to multiple industries. It has been developed in two configurations. The basic version consists of a 10-litre oxygen cylinder, a pressure regulator-cum-flow controller, a humidifier and a nasal cannula. The oxygen flow is regulated manually based on the SpO2 readings. The intelligent configuration includes a system for automatic regulation of oxygen through a low-pressure regulator, electronic control system and an SpO2 probe in addition to the basic version. The system regulates oxygen to patients based on SpO2 levels.

Also, Non-Rebreather Masks are integrated with the oxycare systems for efficient use of oxygen which results in savings of up to 30-40 per cent. Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar visited the DRDO campus on Friday.

Also, the 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG) drug, developed by DRDO, is considered to be a game-changer in the battle against Covid, offering the potential of faster recovery for hospitalised patients.

Surge in DK containment zones

Health officials visit Sudhemugeru, a containment zone in Belthangady taluk

DIVYA CUTINHO @ Mangaluru

WITH the Covid second wave wreaking havoc in the State, the number of containment zones in Dakshina Kannada district has increased to 132 from 50 in just four days. As many as 15 locations were declared containment zones on Friday alone. Mangaluru has 56 containment zones, followed by Bantwal (39), Belthangady (21), Sullia (10) and Puttur (7).

On Friday, at a colony at Kallagudda in Belthangady, 26 new Covid cases were reported. Dr Ashok H, Covid nodal officer, Dakshina Kannada, said cases started increasing in the district from mid-April. The district health department has directed gram panchayats and city corporation to ensure that the people in containment zones get essential services. The MPW and ASHA workers have been told to keep track of positive cases and primary and secondary contacts on a daily basis.

Case against 'Covid+ve' man for attending wedding

A man from Bantwal taluk has been booked for violating home quarantine rules by allegedly attending a wedding at Karkala. According to a complaint filed by the Bantwal PDO, the man had tested positive at Maninalkur. "He had undergone an RT-PCR test at the PHC on May 10," the PDO said. When the officials visited his house on May 13, they found the house locked. The neighbours told that the family was in Karkala to attend a wedding. The man later called the PDO and told him that he got another test done at a private hospital in Mangaluru and the report came negative.

Oxy plants not filling cylinders brought by people a challenge

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

INFORMATION is obtained from each hospital, and once a week, an oxygen audit of each and every hospital in the state is done. So far, two rounds have been completed," Moudgil said. Daily monitoring of oxygen consumption of each district, BBMP zones and hospitals is done and buffer oxygen stocks are being created to handle unforeseen shortages.

Oxygen plants have stopped filling cylinders individually brought by people following government orders. This has become a challenge for Covid-19 patients who need oxygen. "On one hand, there are Covid-19 patients who need a cylinder for the next 8 to 12 hours until they find a bed. On the other hand, hospitals are forcing patients into early discharge due to scarcity of beds and advise continuing medication at home along with oxygen support. These people run for cylinders, which plants are not refilling anymore," said Sabeel Nazir, trustee, Naasih Foundation.

Hospitals entertain patients' families for 1-2 days, giving a letter on the letterhead, which can be shown at the refilling stations for oxygen. However, they do not do it every day, leaving the patients in a lurch. "NGOs like ours running oxygen banks are not given oxygen supply. After the Chamarajanagar incident, they prioritise refills only for patients in hospital," Nazir added.

Ignorance and casual attitude lead to delay in treatment: Doc

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"SOME patients were not able to find an ICU bed for 2-3 days. They suffer due to dipping oxygen saturation levels and breathlessness. This causes a lot of trauma to patients and, in some cases, they have suffered a heart attack at home.

Earlier, home care services would send doctors to the patient's house, but that is not available now," Mudassar pointed out.

Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences Vice-Chancellor Dr S Sacchidanand said that not recognising symptoms early, ignorance of patients and their families and casual attitude also result in delayed treatment and mortality at home. When asked why fatalities at home increased in May, he pointed to the general increase in moderate and severe cases, therefore, leading to more deaths generally.

"Earlier, I used to get 5-10 calls a day from families seeking a bed for a patient, but now, that has reduced to 1-2 calls per day, with implementation of the central bed management system. Final-year MBBS students work with the NGO Step One to monitor home isolation patients, provide tele-counselling and pick-up cases, either requiring hospitalisation or refer them to a senior consultant," said Dr Sacchidanand, chairman of the state Covid Subject Expert Committee.

LENDING SUPPORT

Mysuru ashram gives free food to attendants of patients

K SHIVA KUMAR @ Mysuru

WITH hotels, mobile canteens and other eateries closed because of the lockdown and attendants of Covid-19 patients finding it difficult to get food, the Sri Ganapathi Sachidananda Ashram has started distribution of food packets for free to attendants at all government hospitals.

The ashram distributes 3,000 food pockets every day, and the food is prepared by the ashram's cooks and some 40 volunteers, following all Covid norms. The distribution too is done through the ashram's vehicles.

The Sri Ganapathi Sachidananda Ashram, during the first wave, had donated materials worth Rs 90 lakh and its other branches spent over Rs 3 crore on food kits, sanitisers, masks and other needs.

Sri Ganapathi Sachidananda Swamiji said the Covid second wave has been deadly, and asked people to follow the advisory issued by the government and experts till the curve is flattened.

He said that the ashram is spending Rs 1 lakh a day to provide 3,000 food pockets and appealed to volunteers, who have taken both doses of vaccination, to help supply food on time. They have also roped in two caterers to prepare the food. The ashram donated 600 health kits worth Rs 15 lakh to the traffic police.

Ganapathi Sachidananda Swamiji with the food packets in Mysuru on Friday | UDAYSHANKAR S

Ashram secretary Prasad handed over the kits to Police Commissioner Chandragupta at his office. The health kit includes an oximeter, regular and N 95 mask, multivitamin and paracetamol tablets, sanitiser and other Covid tablets that could be used for a month.

Meanwhile, District incharge Minister S T Somashekar appreciated the services of the ashram during trying times.

Taking serious exception to the denial of entry for ambulances from Andhra Pradesh into Telangana, TS High Court on Friday stayed the operation of the guidelines which mandated that all Covid patients should obtain e-passes to enter Telangana

Andhra CID arrests rebel YSRC MP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Vijayawada

AP CID arrested K Raghu Rama Krishnam Raju, rebel YSRC MP of Narasapuram in West Godavari district, from his residence in Hyderabad on Friday. He was arrested on various charges, including sedition, for 'indulging in hate speeches' against certain communities and spreading 'disaffection' against the government.

According to sources in the CID, Additional Director General (CID) PV Sunil Kumar ordered an inquiry against Raju and during investigation it was revealed that through his speeches on regular basis, the MP was indulging in systematic and schematic effort to cause tensions among the communities and by attacking various government dignitaries in a way, which will cause loss of faith in the government, which they represent. It was also found that Raju's speeches and actions brought hatred and contempt against the State government.

Covid-19, flood threat, monsoon diseases: Kerala faces myriad issues

Experts hope lockdown will show effect soon, say ailments can be curbed by pre-monsoon cleaning

MANOJ VISWANATHAN @Kochi

A Covid spread that claims around 100 lives a day, extreme heavy rainfall that is posing a threat of flood and chances of monsoon diseases. It is an unusual situation and Kerala is facing myriad challenges these days. The heavy rain that has been lashing the state for the past two days has triggered fears of a flood and hundreds have taken shelter at relief camps as low-lying areas have been inundated.

Huge tidal waves rising to more than one-metre height have been lashing the shores forcing the coastal populace to shift to safer places.

The water level in rivers is rising and there is a chance of flooding in coastal areas as the flood water is not draining into the sea due to the storm surge. Though the major dams have reached only 30 per cent of their storage capacity, the situation may change if the rain continues unabated in the high ranges for more than three days.

Residents being taken to a relief camp after many houses were destroyed due to strong waves at Ottamassery in Cherthala taluk of Alappuzha on Friday | ARUN ANGELA

Kerala reported only 57 fresh cases of Covid and had a caseload of 1,326 during the onset of monsoon on June 1, 2020. A year on, the situation is totally different, with around 40,000 fresh cases adding a day and the test positivity rate standing close to 30 per cent. If the relief camps get crowded, it will be a daunting task for the Covid frontline warriors to stop the pandemic spread.

The dengue fever shows a four-five-year cycle and the chances of an outbreak is very high. As the frontline workers are deployed on Covid duty, social workers, NGOs and political parties should come forward to launch the pre-monsoon cleaning drive," said Kerala Government Medical Officers Association president Dr G S Vijayakrishnan.

Lockdown extended till May 23, stricter curbs in 4 districts

T'Puram: In the wake of the Covid-19 test positivity rate (TPR) remaining high in all districts, the ongoing statewide lockdown has been extended by a week till May 23. Triple lockdown, with stricter restrictions like no inter-district travel, cordoning off containment zones with single entry/exit point and ban on infected persons and their contacts from stepping outside their houses, will be in force in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Malappuram from May 16 (Sunday) on account of the high caseload in these districts. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan also said vaccination for people in the 18-44 age group will begin on Monday (May 17) with online registrations commencing on Saturday.

Israel blast victim's body to arrive today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kochi

THE mortal remains of **Soumya Santhosh**, the Malayali caretaker, who died in a mortar shell attack at Ashkelon in Israel on May 11, will be brought to Kerala on Saturday. An Israeli flight carrying the body took off from the country at 8.30 pm on Friday and is expected to reach Delhi airport by 4 am on Saturday. Minister of state for external affairs V Muraleedharan will receive the body at Delhi airport. The body is expected to reach Kochi airport by a domestic flight at 5.20 pm. Idukki MP Dean Kuriakose will receive the body at the airport. The body will reach the house of Soumya at Kanjiramthanam near Adimali in Idukki district around 9 pm on Saturday. The funeral will be held at Keerithodu Nitya Sahaya Matha Church cemetery at 2 pm on Sunday.

Soumya,30, was working as a caretaker at a house at Ashkelon in Israel -- that borders the Gaza strip. She had been working in Israel for the past 7 years.

"The Israel government has been very helpful and has provided all possible help to ensure early repatriation of the body to India," said Soumya's sister-in-law Sherly Benny.

Liquor sales in K'taka still steady despite lockdown

ASHWINI M SRIPAD
@ Bengaluru

DESPITE the raging pandemic and the lockdown imposed to contain the spread of the virus, the government does not seem to be feeling much of a pinch as regards revenue from liquor sales. The Excise Department is witnessing near-average sales of liquor and revenue generation has not been affected much, compared to other departments, though liquor outlets are open only for takeaways between 6 am to 10 am.

As per the data available with *The New Indian Express*, average sale of liquor at present is 1.6 lakh boxes (including Indian Made Liquor and beer) per day, compared to 1.7 lakh boxes on normal days. While one box of IML contains 8.64 litres of liquor, one box of beer contains 7.8 litres.

According to the sources in the Excise department, while the normal daily revenue generation is to the tune of Rs65 crore, it has now dropped to Rs 55-58 crore. One of the main reasons for this is because liquor is not served in restaurants, bars or pubs due to the lockdown. However, sales have not been affected much as takeaway has increased.

Speaking to *The New Indian Express*, Excise Minister Gopalaiah said that last year, they had to shut all liquor shops for 53 days. "But, when we opened in May 2020, there was a huge rush outside liquor shops, which is not acceptable during a pandemic. This year, we have allowed a four-hour window for sales so that there is lesser crowding. Once the situation returns to normal, we will open all liquor outlets at regular timings."

It is interesting to note that during 2020-2021, the targeted excise revenue was Rs 22,700 crore, which was achieved. This year, the target is Rs 24,580 crore and officials are hopeful of reaching it.

KEEPING IT FLOWING

Liquor sale in May 2021

Day	In lakh boxes
May 3	1.71
May 4	2.29
May 5	1.65
May 6	1.69
May 7	2.57
May 10	2.83
May 11	3.07
May 12	1.87

* May 1, 2, 8 and 9 were government holidays

Fee row: Pvt schools ready to stage protest

PEARL MARIA DSOUZA
@ Bengaluru

RURAL budget schools in the state are struggling due to the lack of fees. They are ready to start a protest in case the state government does not issue an order mandating parents to pay at least 70 per cent of the school fees. Halnur S Lepaksh, state president of Recognised Unaided Private Schools Association (RUPSA), Karnataka, termed it ridiculous that the commissioner of public instruction on Saturday asked that the results of students from classes 1 to 9 be updated, due to the second wave and lockdown till May 24. He asked how it was possible to work without staffers, as schools will remain closed till May 24.

About 10 to 20 per cent of parents have not registered their wards and have asked to keep them in same class, he added. "Yet the department has asked schools to register the students in the SATS software for the academic year 2019-20," he said.

Lokesh Talikatte, former RUPSA president, said that schools were ready to agitate against the department if the 70 per cent fee demand was not mandated by the state government. He said the department has forced students to register on SATS.

A parent on condition of anonymity told *TNIE* that when he paid more than 70 per cent of the fees, the school was ready to waive the third installment, but this arrangement was made orally. However, when he applied for a TC due to the substandard teaching, he was asked to pay the entire fees for the certificate.

BSY's ex-media adviser passes away

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister BS Yediyurappa's former media adviser, who enjoyed a cabinet rank, Mahadev Prakash, passed away due to Covid-related complications on Friday.

Prakash, who quit the post seven months ago following differences with Yediyurappa, was the editor of Ee Bhanuvara, a vernacular periodical. The magazine that started as a weekly had transformed into a monthly a few years ago.

Mourning his death, Yediyurappa sad, "It is unfortunate that he fell prey to Covid." KPCC president DK Shivakumar, who represents the Kanakapura Assembly constituency, knew Prakash well as he hailed from Maralebekuppe near Kanakapura. Shivakumar said, "The void created by his death cannot be filled."

Prakash, a prolific writer, was a columnist with many vernacular publications. He used to also anchor a daily news programme on a vernacular TV channel.

Sidda Raju, a former chairman of the Karnataka Media Academy, said, "He had an amazing memory and would reel out historical facts accurately. I happened to be on several TV debates with Prakash and he would get his facts always right." DL Harish, who worked with him as assistant editor at Ee Bhanuvara, said, "He gave us all a free hand to write."

Many leaders expressed shock at his passing on. Among them were former chief minister H D Kumaraswamy, DCM Laxman Savadi, Home Minister Basavraj Bommai, BJP state president Nalin Kumar Kateel, Congress MLC B K Hariprasad, MLC Adagur Vishwanath and tourism minister CP Yogeshwar.

CRIME PATROL

Two arrested for selling Remdesivir illegally

BENGALURU: Sanjaynagar police arrested two people for allegedly selling Remdesivir injections illegally. Two vials were seized from the accused. The accused are Dr Sagar C G (38), a resident of MS Palya in BTM Layout, and Krishna (31), of Kamakshipalya. While Sagar was treating Covid patients in Mathru Hospital on Hosur Road, Krishna was manager of the housekeeping department at the same hospital.

FIR against Sanjjanaa for assaulting film producer

BENGALURU: Cubbon Park police have registered an FIR against actress Sanjjanaa Galrani, for allegedly assaulting a female film producer. The alleged incident took place on December 24, 2019, at Kaze Club on Lavelle Road. The complainant, Vandana Jain, had filed a private complaint before the court, seeking directions to the police to register an FIR against Galrani and investigate the case.

Three held for selling oxygen cylinders in black

BENGALURU: CCB sleuths on Thursday arrested three men who were selling oxygen cylinders in black. The accused were demanding `70,000 for each cylinder. Police also seized oxygen concentrators worth `5 lakh from the accused. The arrested Manjunath S (27) Rajakumar R (32) and Anil Kumar V (39), all residents of Cottonpet. Police said based on a tip-off, a special team raided their office.

EXPRESS READ

Brother of OPS succumbs to Covid-19

CHENNAI: Chief Minister MK Stalin, AIADMK joint coordinator Edappadi K Palaniswami, and leaders of various political parties on Friday condoled the death of O Balamurugan, brother of AIADMK coordinator O Panneerselvam, at Periyakulam. The chief minister said he consoled Panneerselvam over telephone. AIADMK joint coordinator Edappadi K Palaniswami, in his message, said he was pained to hear about the death of Balamurugan. Dravidar Kazhagam president K Veeramani, MDMK General Secretary Vaiko and leaders of many other political parties extended their condolences to Panneerselvam.

'More than works, it is important to save lives'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

SHIVAKUMAR, who accompanied Siddaramaiah, said Congress parliamentarians and legislators are ready to stop development works in their areas. "We are ready to stop all development works in our constituencies. It is our bounden duty to save lives rather than carry out development works," he added.

The Congress sought "two small permissions" from the BJP-led governments at the State and Centre to procure vaccines and intends to write a letter to this effect. "My appeal to the BJP is to not let politics come in the way and in the spirit of Atmanirbhar Bharat, allow Congress to directly procure and administer vaccines," Shivakumar said, taking to his social media pages later in the day. Currently, vaccine procurement rules in India allow central and state governments, hospitals and industries to directly procure vaccines, the party said.

The gesture is similar to Shivakumar's offer to pay for the tickets of migrant workers who were being charged subsidised prices by the State Government during the national lockdown. Stung by the offer, the state had waived ticket fares and assured free travel to migrant workers. Taking a cue from Karnataka Congress leaders, the party's national leaders too had made similar offers to the Union Government.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RWS&S DIVISION, BHADRAK
Tel: 06784-240979, e-mail: **rwssdivisionbhadrak@gmail.com**
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Tendering
O-152 **Identification No. 03 dt. 06.05.2021**

1.	Name & Nos of work	:	08 Nos of Rural piped water supply Schemes
2.	Estimated cost	:	Rs. 62.96 lakhs to 107.61 lakhs
3.	Class of Contractor	:	B & A
4.	Cost of Tender Paper	:	As Per DTCN
5.	Period of Completion	:	09 Months to 10 Months
6.	Mode of submission	:	Tenders should be submitted only online in **www.tenderorissa.gov.in**
7.	Period of Availability of tenders online	:	10.00 hours of dt. 18.05.2021 to 17.00 hours of date 27.05.2021
8.	Last date & time of Seeking clarification	:	Date 24.05.2021 up-to 5.00 P.M.
9.	Last date & time of bidding online	:	Date 27.05.2021 up-to 5.00 P.M.
10.	Date & time opening of tender bid	:	Date 28.05.2021 at- 11.00 A.M.
11.	Name and address of the officer inviting Tender	:	Executive Engineer RWS&S Division, Bhadrak

12. Further details can be seen from the e-Procument portal **www.tendersorissa.gov.in (https/tendersodisha.gov.in)**
13. Subsequent modification/ corrigendum/ Addendum if required shall appear in website only.
14. Further details can be seen from the e-Procument portal **www.tendersorissa.gov.in** (https/tendersodisha.gov.in)
15. Chargeable Head : - **JJM**

Sd/-Executive Engineer,
RWS&S Division, Bhadrak OIPR-25020/11/0004/2122

E-mail ID: - dpcsndgssa.opepa@nic.in
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DISTRICT PROJECT OFFICE,
SAMAGRA SIKSHYA, SUNDARGARH
"e"-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No- DPC/SS/SNG/04 of 2020-21.
Letter No: -1400/Civil/ Date: -12/May/ 2021

1.	District Project Co-ordinator, Samagra Sikshya, Sundargarh on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in Double cover system on ON-LINE mode from eligible contractors with valid licenses for "Improvement of Infrastructure (Civil +Electrical +PH +Renovation) in the Schools" as detailed in DTCN.		
2.	Nature of Work	:-	Improvement of Infrastructure (Civil + Electrical + PH + Repair & Renovation) in the Schools.
3.	No. of works.	:-	**109 (One hundred Nine nos).**
4.	Cost of Tender Paper	:-	**Rs. 10,000/- In 102 Projects & Rs. 6,000/- In 7 Projects**
5.	Class of Contractor	:-	**"B" & "A" In 101 Projects / "C" & "B" In 6 Projects / "D" & "C" In 1 Project / "A" & "Special" In 1 project**
6.	Availability of bid document in the website	:-	**From 10.00 Hours of date - 17.05.2021 to 17.00 Hours of date- 01.06.2021**
7.	Date of opening of Bid	:-	**11:00 A.M. On Dt. 02.06.2021**
8.	The bidders have to participate in ON-LINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website **(https://tendersodisha.gov.in)**. Any addendum /corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.		

Sd/- Pramod Kumar Sarangi
District Project Co-ordinator,
Samagra Sikshya, Sundargarh

COCHIN PORT TRUST
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT
(ESTATE DIVISION), COCHIN - 682 009
E-mail: secretary@cochinport.gov.in

E-TENDER NOTICE

Lease of 3 plots at Vallarpadam of area 5, 5 and 1.51 acre for Warehouse Purpose for a period of 30 years **(T.No. MSTC/17/21-22/3728)**. For details, visit **www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/kopt/indexcpt.jsp** or **www.cochinport.gov.in**

SD/-
SECRETARY
Cochin-9 Ph: 0484-2582127,
12.05.2021 Fax: 0484-2668163

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WORKS DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
EASTERN CIRCLE (R&B), BALASORE
e-mail: - seec_bls@rediffmail.com
Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No.SEEC-02/ 2021-22
No: 2098 / Dt: 28.04.2021
B-85

Nature of work:-	Building Works
Number of works:	05 (Five) No Building Works
Amount put to Tender:-	Rs.106.79 Lakh to Rs.552.87 Lakh
Class of Contractor:-	"B" & "A" & "Special" Class
Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal:-	Dt.18.05.2021 at 10:00 AM
Last Date / Time of receipt of bid in the portal:-	Dt.07.06.2021 up to 05:00 PM
Date of opening of bid :-	Dt.08.06.2021 at 11:00 AM
Name & address of the Office inviting bid:-	Superintending Engineer, Eastern Circle (R&B), Balasore

The bidders have to participate in **ONLINE** bidding only. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal **"http//tendersodisha.gov.in."** All future corrigendum will be available on ONLINE mode only.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
Eastern Circle (R&B) Balasore
OIPR- 34026/11/0002/2122

Government of Karnataka.
(PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DEPTARTMENT)
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER P.R.E. DIVISION BIDAR.
No: EE/PRED/BDR/TS-1/2021-22/118 Date: 12-05-2021

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDERS

On behalf of Governor of Karnataka, The Executive Engineer, P.R.E. Division Bidar invites Tenders from eligible Tenderers, for 02 works approved under K.K.R.D.B. and 5054-03-337-0-75 (3054-80-196-1-01-300) schemes as per KW-4 in Two Cover System. Amount put to tender for the works are Minimum Rs. 114,55,203.45 (Rupees One Crore Fourteen Lakhs Fifty Five Thousand Two Hundred Three and paise forty five only) & Maximum Rs. 366,26,384.49 (Rupees Three Crore Sixty Six Lakhs Twenty Six Thousand Three Hundred Eighty Four and paise forty nine only) Tender documents may be downloaded from the e.procurement portal of the Govt. of Karnataka Viz. http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in. Tenders must be submitted through e-procurement portal on or before 16.00 hours up to 14.06.2021. Technical Bid will be opened on 15.06.2021 & Financial Bid will be opened on 19.06.2021 respectively. Further any other information can be seen from the e-procurement portal or can be had from the undersigned.

DIP/Bidar/11/MC&A/2021-22

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
P.R.E. Division, Bidar.

EDITORIAL

As early as the eleventh century, the *Panchatantra* had reached Europe, and before 1600, it existed in Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, German, Czech, etc. ... Its range extended from Java to Iceland

Franklin Edgerton

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

DESPITE VACCINE ASSURANCE, CENTRE HAS HUGE TASK AHEAD

Amid an acute shortage of vaccines, which has forced many state governments to defer the immunisation process of people in the 18-44 age group, the assurance by the Centre that by August-December more than 200 crore vaccine doses would be available is a welcome relief. The government said it had made this projection based on data submitted to it by eight manufacturers, mostly local. If this projected vaccine availability actually happens, then the country with a population of 130 crore will not only be immunised but India could be in a position to export the surplus vaccines as well. But given the government's absolute bungling of the Covid-19 second wave, its claim on vaccine availability will have to be taken with a pinch of salt. Long before production of the vaccines actually started, a comprehensive plan should have been put in place taking into account factors such as demand, supply and capacity. It is clear from the current shortage that there was no such plan.

But a more pertinent issue is: Can this massive ramping up of capacity actually happen in this very tight time frame of August-December? Many experts believe it will be a humungous task for two reasons. One, the capacity augmentation will depend a lot on the availability of raw material, which is mostly imported. Second, experts point out that production of vaccines is a highly complex and time-consuming process. Even if funds are made available in adequate measure, it can take up to months to ramp up production on a large scale. Given this scenario, many are of the view that the government must import vaccines quickly. Negotiations are already on with Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. But at least one of these manufacturers is understood to be insisting on an indemnity clause wherein the company is not held liable for any death due to its vaccine. The government will have to weigh all the pros and cons before taking this call as it is a highly emotive and politically sensitive issue. Many Western nations where these three vaccine brands are available have agreed to this indemnity. The government must consult various stakeholders, experts and opposition parties before taking a decision.

WHY NOT A VIRTUAL KERALA SWEARING-IN?

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan created history when he won a consecutive second term in office. The new ministry led by him is expected to be sworn in on May 20, nearly three weeks after the declaration of the Assembly election verdict. The delay, we were told, was on account of the worsening Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent need to impose a statewide lockdown. With the deadly virus still on the rampage, the lockdown has been extended till May 23, but there's a constitutional need for the next government to take charge by May 24, when the term of the present administration ends. The situation demands that the plans for a grand swearing-in ceremony be set aside and the ministry be administered the oath of office in a simple affair, stripped to bare formalities. At a time when the raging pandemic and the restrictions in place to contain it have greatly disrupted people's lives, a lavish event that celebrates a political victory would seem out of place, to say the least. Besides, it's also an opportunity for the new government to emphasise that it is ready to play by the rules it makes for the common man. So, instead of the planned function at Thiruvananthapuram's Central Stadium, the Cabinet can be sworn in at the Raj Bhavan itself with only those required in attendance.

Or, the CM can set an example, and thereby create history again, by exploring the options for a virtual ceremony. At a time when education has gone online almost completely, digital meeting places have replaced workplaces, judges across the country are hearing cases and delivering verdicts virtually, and Cabinet meetings and global conferences are held over digital platforms, a virtual swearing-in is an option worth considering. Of course, the constitutional requirements should be taken care of and certain formalities may need to be dispensed with, to be fulfilled later. And there will be objections and hurdles that will have to be overcome.

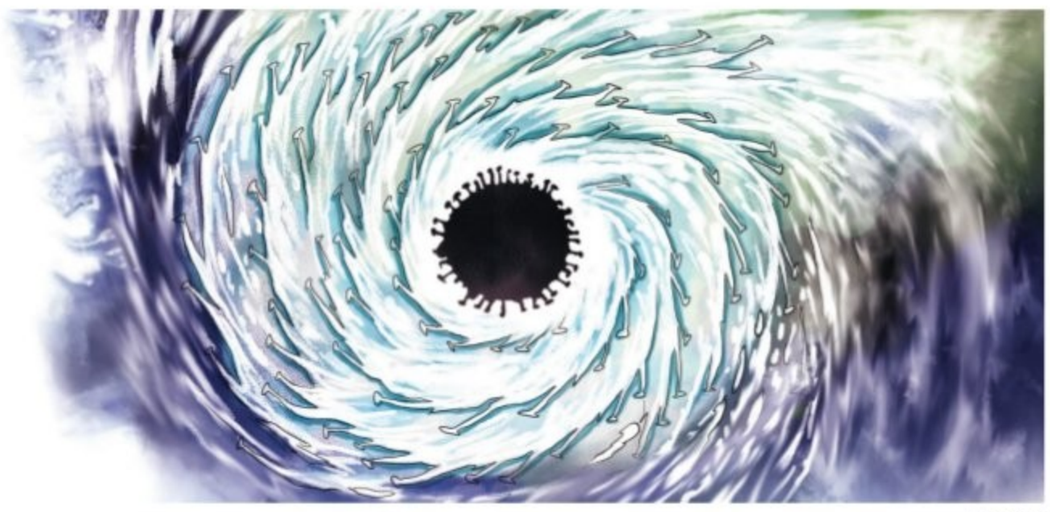
The pandemic has changed the world we live in and the new realities need new rules and conventions—and breaking of the old ones. An online swearing-in ceremony, if it materialises, will be another Kerala model.

Quite a few puzzles set by the virus are slowly getting solved, but we need to be prepared for more to come as the pandemic is yet to be tamed

THE SARS-COV-2 VIRUS AS A WILY WIZARD

DR K SRINATH REDDY

Cardiologist, epidemiologist and President, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI)



AMIT BANDRE

The Sars-Cov-2 virus continues to throw fresh surprises at us and show new tricks, despite 16 months of intense observation by an endangered world. Even as vaccines and drugs are emerging with proof of efficacy against the virus, it periodically displays a Houdini-like talent to escape capture and sends us on a search for fresh clues to uncover its disguises.

Three such enigmas have come forth recently in the second wave of the pandemic. Variants of the virus have entered or emerged to alter the dynamics of transmission. Cases of reinfection are being reported after full vaccination which, although very few, are leading to concerns and calls for explanation. Among recovered cases of Covid-19, there have been instances of mucormycosis or 'black fungus' being reported. Each of these needs examination.

It is well known that viruses mutate. It is in their nature to do so, because of evolutionary biology. If they have to survive as a species, there are two conditions. They should find ways to become more infective while escaping the effect of host immunity. They should also not completely wipe out the host, lest their own species goes extinct. So there is a trade-off between infectivity and virulence based on how much of the host population is available to the virus at any time.

The virus also needs time to experiment with its mutations while in the human body. The longer it can stay, greater the opportunity. Some of the earlier mutations of Sars-Cov-2 are thought to have arisen in immunosuppressed people in whom it lingered long. Young people who overcome the virus fast with their strong immunity will not give the virus the luxury to mutate, while elderly debilitated persons do. People on prolonged ventilation provide a long period for mutation.

We now have three variants driving the spread in India. B.1.117 came from Britain. B.1.617 debuted in Maharashtra while B.1.618 emerged in Bengal. They have displaced most of the earlier variants that did not have the speed and strength of these dons. However, they too can be stalled from entering our body by protecting our nose, mouth and eyes with a mask and eye protection. We also need to prevent superspreader gatherings, which give them access to many people. Rapidly vaccinating a large number of people also slows transmission and stalls mutation.

Rapid spread of the virus in the second wave, through multiple mutations, is consistent with the view of "viruses as complex adaptive systems" (read a 2019 book of that title by Ricard Sole and Santiago F Elena). A physician friend who is fascinated by fractals and chaos theory points out that the virus buds in multiple locations and replicates towards infinity like Mandelbrot sets, named after mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot who pioneered fractal geometry. We should not let them proceed in that direction by adopting effective interventions to limit transmission and create pre-emptive immunity through vaccines.

> Even as vaccines and drugs are emerging with proof of efficacy against the virus, it periodically displays a Houdini-like talent to escape capture and sends us on a search for fresh clues to uncover its disguises. Three such enigmas have come forth recently in the second wave of the pandemic

Reinfections, occurring even after full vaccination, are also explainable. All vaccines that have been evaluated so far are systemic vaccines that produce systemic immunity to fight the virus, to prevent severe disease and death after a person is infected. Trials have evaluated them for those end points, not against infection per se. As efficacy rates for the vaccines used in India range from 62-81%, severe Covid can still occur in some vaccinated people and mild Covid can occur in more. Hospital staff, who are repeatedly subjected to high viral loads, are more likely to get 'breakthrough' infections. Hence the advice for even vaccinated people to wear masks till a large part of the population is vaccinated.

When many people are rapidly vaccinated in a population, such infections will become very infrequent because mild cases do not release many viruses into the circulation to infect others. We are seeing that happen in Israel, the UK and US. These countries had also used mRNA vaccines that have around 95% efficacy against severe Covid. Mucosal vaccines may be able to prevent even the initial infection but trial evidence is still awaited.

Mucormycosis is a fungal infection that affects the nose and can spread to eyes and brain. It has been seen in people who were treated with oxygen. They may have been infected by the water through which the oxygen is bubbled. It was not noted during the first wave, because steroids were not being used as standard treatment for patients on oxygen. After the RECOVERY trial showed the benefit of dexamethasone, it became standard therapy during the second wave. Tocilizumab is an even stronger immunosuppressive drug that has been used and misused during the second wave. Fungal infections tend to occur more frequently in immunosuppressed people. Such cases need to be investigated and all sources of infection must be contained.

These crossword puzzles set by the virus may be getting solved, but we should be ready for more to come as the wily virus is still to be tamed.

(Views expressed are personal)

(ksrinath.reddy@phfi.org)

LUNAR ECLIPSE & THE INTELLIGENT RABBIT IN HAMPI

SRINIVAS SISTLA

Associate Professor, Department of Fine Arts, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

Any thoughts about a hare/rabbit bring to my mind a handful of fables and a few works of art of ancient India, and even world over. Mohenjo-daro of the Indus civilisation (before 1900 BCE), for instance, had yielded a life-like terracotta figurine and two copper plaque engravings, which show a rabbit each. Albrecht Durer (1471-1528) of Germany had produced, in 1502, a watercolour study of a 'Young Hare', which appears more realistic than any similar kind of work that might have been produced in 'Photorealism' of recent origin.

With regard to fables associated with the hare, one often hears about a marathon between the slow-moving tortoise and the fast-paced rabbit in which the latter loses the race, mainly because of its foolishness. I thought that this was an Indian story, until I read that it was written by Aesop (c. 564 BCE), the Greek fabulist. In many Indian tales, however, the rabbit figures as an intelligent animal. In a story from *Panchatantra* (c.300-200 BCE) and *Hitopadesa* (800-950 CE), a rabbit makes a ferocious but numbskull lion fall into a well and die as it was eating all other animals in the forest indiscreetly. In another story from the former text, one among the rabbits living on the banks of the Moon Lake fools a king-elephant by stating that their king-rabbit lives in the moon, and shows the planet's reflection in the waters, and thus averts the elephants from coming to the lake. In *Sasa Jataka* (No. 316), a hare offers itself as food to Sakka (Indra of Buddhism), who in turn draws a figure of the hare on the moon. I remember reading such fables in a children's magazine, *Chandamama*, which had a logo of a rabbit in the full moon. Though the logo is of recent origin, the idea of a rabbit in the moon dates prior to the times of *Panchatantra* and other stories.

The moon craters that appear to the naked eye have been visualised as various animals, most notably a rabbit. According to scholars, *sasa* (rabbit in Sanskrit) was mentioned once in the *Rig Veda* as a "swallower of a razor"; and, in the *Atharva Veda*, a few unspecified animals were described as *Sasayu* in the sense that they lurk to catch hares as prey. The *Satapata Brahmana* (XI. I. 5. 3), a commentary on the *Sukla Yajur Veda*, and *Jaiminiya Brahmana* (I. 2. 8) of the *Sama Veda* mention the presence of the hare in the moon. The *Aaranyaparva* of the *Mahabharata* also mentions the hare as a breakfast item, a lake named *Sesa Tirtha*, and also the rabbit-bearing moon (III. 226. 2). Further, Sanskrit names like Sasadhara and Sachin mean 'marked by hare' i.e., the moon.

In ancient Indian coins, inscriptions and the emblems of various dynasties, the sun and moon were shown together to indicate eternity, which coincides with the idiom, 'As long as the sun and the moon endure'. The full moon with a rabbit in it and a single or a pair of serpents, which represent *Rahu*, the shadow-planet, had also been shown on the ceiling of the *Raja-gopura* of many medieval Hindu Temples. *Rahu*, according to Hindu mythologies, causes the lunar eclipse in which he swallows the moon first and then unswallows it. Sri Bala Krishna temple, which was constructed by Krishna Deva Raya (r.1509-1529) in 1515, near Hampi, contains a well-preserved carving of the rabbit-bearing full moon, which is flanked by a pair of serpents. Interestingly, the rabbit is shown running away while looking backwards at the serpent with its split tongue so clearly discernable. This clearly suggests that the rabbit had become scared of the impending danger of the eclipse, and hence is trying to escape from the moon.

In Sri Malyavanta Raghunatha temple, near Hampi, the same lunar eclipse was carved, but with a unique and unparalleled twist in the 'visual narration' of the story. Here, the serpent *Rahu* is shown approaching the full moon; and interestingly, the rabbit is shown comfortably sitting on a patch of the ground next to the moon, but not within it. Such a visual delineation clearly suggests that the rabbit had become fully aware of the periodic nature of the lunar eclipse. Apparently, after sensing the impending danger of the eclipse, the rabbit had intelligently hopped onto the ground. Further, as the rabbit is shown facing the moon, it is quite evident that it is waiting for the completion of the eclipse so as to get back to its original abode, the moon. To the best of my knowledge, this kind of 'visual narration' is most likely unique to this carving with no parallel in any textual sources on the episode. Therefore, in my opinion, the masterly idea and its creative presentation in the carving could indeed be exclusively credited to the anonymous artist(s) who had carved the relief on the outer compound wall of the temple.

The hare in the moon also figures in Chinese, Javanese and Japanese literature and art; and, a different set of ancient Indian texts also mention the presence of the *Kasturi Mriga* (musk deer) in the moon, but the same could perhaps be explored in a separate article.

(sistlasrini@gmail.com)

(L) Terracotta hare and two copper plaque engravings with a hare each, from Mohenjo-daro; (R above) full moon with a hare, flanked by a pair of serpents, in Bala Krishna temple, Hampi; (R below) serpent, full moon and rabbit in Malyavanta Raghunatha temple, Hampi; a unique visual narration in Vijayanagara art, it suggests the rabbit has become aware of the periodic nature of the lunar eclipse

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

The need for tech transfer

The idea of technology transfer from Bharat Biotech to other labs for increased production of Covaxin is timely. Many private hospitals in all parts of the nation have reported that there is no supply of the indigenous vaccine, some for more than three weeks. This is concerning for people who are awaiting their second dose of Covaxin.

S Vaithianathan, Madurai

Adequate infra needed

The incessant clamour by opposition parties that the Centre is sleeping over the mass production of vaccines is inappropriate and irresponsible. Production of the jabs involves a very delicate process. Without adequate infrastructure, highly trained scientists, and a fully equipped lap, the process can lead to untold hazards.

Hullasa Behera, Bhubaneswar

Functioning of the IVC

The Centre's Integrated Vaccine Complex in Chengalpattu, established in 2012, has been kept idle since its inception. With India facing a severe shortage of vaccines, the letter by former Union health minister Anbumani Ramadoss to Dr Harsh Vardhan, the incumbent, regarding the IVC is important. One hopes the health ministry steps up.

S Sathavu, Theni

Onus on US to stop Israel

The murder being committed in the Gaza Strip merits condemnation. Israel's outdated eye-for-an-eye policy has no place in a world grappling against a pandemic. The onus is on the US, under whose patronage the nation flexes her belligerent muscles, to prevail upon her to quell her murderous ways.

Dr George Jacob, Kochi

Iron dome shield for India?

With state-of-the-art military technology, Israel is showing its might in Gaza, targeting locations linked to Hamas, the militant group (*Israel's two fronts: Rockets from Gaza & violence in cities*, May 14). Our country must explore the option of developing an iron dome shield similar to the one Israel is using for cities vulnerable to missile attacks from our neighbouring nations.

Parthasarathy Mandadi, Tirupati

Change in political culture

Kudos to all parties in Tamil Nadu for coming together to intensify lockdown at a time of distress. This has happened not just at the top level, but percolated all the way down to the district levels as well. Even an all-party advisory committee is being formed. A change in political culture is visible and it augurs well for the state.

K Ganesh, Coimbatore

Sculptor will be missed

The demise of renowned sculptor Kanaka Murthy due to Covid-19 has cast a pall of gloom all over Karnataka. She had won many laurels for her great work, including the Karnataka Jakanachari Award, State Shilpakala Academy Award, Karnataka Rajyotsava Award and Suvarna Karnataka Award. May her soul rest in peace.

N J Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

Rahul Gandhi @RahulGandhi
GOI's vaccine policy is compounding the problem. Vaccine purchase should be centralised and distribution decentralised. India cannot afford this

Sanjay Singh AAP @SanjayAzadSln
The Corona situation in UP is not being investigated. Data of deaths is being hidden. Bodies are buried in sand and thrown in the rivers

Prakash Javadekar @PrakashJavdekar
There was a PM who said that out of ₹100 sent only ₹15 reaches beneficiary. Today, PM Modi has sent ₹19K cr directly into accounts of 9.5 cr kisan families

74 Die in 4 days as oxygen dips in Goa hosp

Probe ordered as hospital authorities say they are facing technical & logistical issues while installing cylinders

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Panaji

As many as 74 Covid-19 patients have died in the Goa Medical College & Hospital (GMCH) in Goa due to disruption in medical oxygen supply in the last four days.

There were reports of the death of 13 more Covid patients at GMCH, the state's largest Covid care centre, on Friday amid reports of a sudden reduction in the oxygen supply. Early Thursday, 15 people died, on Wednesday 20 patients died, and on Tuesday, 26 people died – all between 2 and 6 am.

After Tuesday's incident, the Bombay High Court had told the BJP-led government to ensure that such deaths don't recur and that there was enough medical oxygen in the state.

Goa CM Pramod Sawant visited the GMHC earlier this week | FILE PHOTO

Goa Forward Party head and MLA Vijay Sardesai said the health system in Goa had completely collapsed. "The government is busy in publicity only while said they were facing technical and logistical issues while installing oxygen cylinders. "Once an oxygen cylinder is exhausted, it is replaced and that time, the supply gets affected, which has led to the death of a few people in the hospital. The hospital is working on addressing the issue," said a hospital official.

> The BJP led Goa govt has failed on all fronts. People are dying while CM Pramod Sawant and Health Minister Vishwajith Rane are busy fighting corruption cases
>
> Girish Chondkar, president, Goa Congress

The state government has set up a three-member committee to probe the deaths. The committee will submit its report in the next three days.

"The BJP led Goa government has failed on all fronts. People are dying due to lack of oxygen and Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and his Health Minister Vishwajith Rane are busy fighting over corruption cases," said Girish Chondkar, president of the Goa Congress.

He alleged that the Central government was indifferent to the Goa situation. "We are facing shortages of oxygen, medicines and vaccines. But no one has the time for Goa. All are interested in politics," Chondkar alleged. Opposition Leader Digambar Kamat said the CM must take responsibility of the deaths and announce compensation to the affected families.

A vaccination centre remains shut due to shortage of jabs in Mumbai on Friday | PTI

1.9 cr vax doses to be supplied by Centre for next two weeks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

THE Centre on Friday said that it will supply states with 1.92 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines between May 16 and 31, which includes 162.5 lakh doses of Covishield and 29.49 lakh doses of Covaxin.

The state-wise allocations, according to the Union ministry of health and family welfare, have been made based on the consumption pattern and beneficiary load for the second doses.

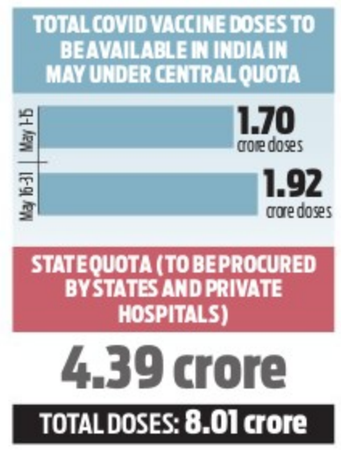
The Union government has asked the states to use 70 per cent of their quota to vaccinate the beneficiaries of second dose while 30 per cent can be used for the first-time beneficiaries. Also, the supplies being shared by the Centre with the states can only be used for immunising the priority groups and not those in the 18-44 year age group.

The health ministry said the delivery schedule for upcoming allocation is being shared with the states in advance, adding that the states have been requested to direct the officials to ensure rational and judicious utilisation of allocated doses and minimise wastage.

The basic objective behind informing the states in advance about the quantum of vaccines allocated from the central quota, as per the ministry, is to ensure that they prepare effective plans for judicious and optimum utilisation of the vaccine doses, meant for 45-plus age group and healthcare and frontline workers.

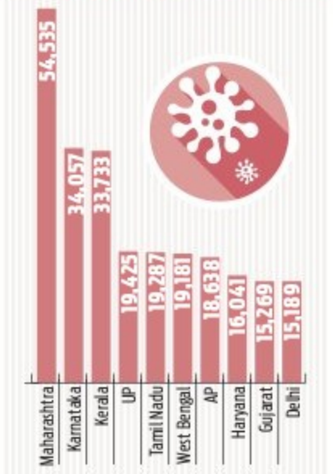
Between May 1 and 15, the Centre has made 1.7 crore vaccine doses available to states while over 4.39 crore vaccine doses were available for direct procurement by states and private hospitals during this month.

The total vaccine doses to be available this month are about 8 crore. So far, the cumulative number of vaccine doses administered in the country has reached 17.93 crore till Friday morning.


TOTAL COVID VACCINE DOSES TO BE AVAILABLE IN INDIA IN MAY UNDER CENTRAL QUOTA
May 1-15
1.70 crore doses
May 16-31
1.92 crore doses
STATE QUOTA (TO BE PROCURED BY STATES AND PRIVATE HOSPITALS)
4.39 crore
TOTAL DOSES: 8.01 crore

INDIA'S COVID TRACKER

71% of new recoveries are in 10 states



SpiceJet airlifts 55K concentrators

New Delhi: SpiceJet has airlifted 55,000 oxygen concentrators and relief material. The airline said that it has airlifted a record number of oxygen concentrators from USA, Singapore and China. Besides, it transported a record 88,802 kg of vaccine shipment between January 12 and April 12. The airline has been deploying its wide-body and narrow-body aircraft for these operations

37,04,893
Active cases

2,00,79,599
Number of people recuperated

31,13,24,100
Samples tested up to May 13

18,75,515
Samples tested on Thursday

Source: Health Ministry

These Kota sisters live in a void, face harsh future

COVID'S ORPHANS PART-5

RAJESH ASNANI @Jaipur

THE suddenness of losing one's parents in a matter of days is a tragedy multiplied a hundred times over. Ask Poorvi (26) and Riya (24), who saw their Covid-stricken parents lurch into lifelessness. One final clasp of Riya's hand by her mother — as tight as it could have been — and it was all over on April 29. She stood still for many, many moments. Then, she moved, all alone, to cremate her because Poorvi, her elder sister, was with their father, fighting a losing battle.

Till about a month back, the Kota family had everything a middle-class family aspires. Shyam and Mahima Maheshwari ran a hostel for students, Poorvi, an IT engineer, had a job in Noida and Riya had finished her Mass Comm. Things changed on April 24 when Riya called up to say that their mother had been hospitalised. Poorvi says their mother caught the infection from their father who was suffering from high fever after he got vaccinated.

For about a week, the couple was under treatment of a doctor, a relative, at their home. But their conditions worsened and they were admitted to the new Medical College Hospital, Kota. While their father Shyam tested positive, their mother's report was negative initially though her chest CT Scan revealed that she had pneumonia. Poorvi says a week before he was admitted to the hospital, he had got vaccinated.

Before that he had no illness nor did he suffer from any symptoms. "We don't know if it was the vaccine that got him into trouble or whether he already had the infection when he got himself vaccinated," says Poorvi.

Poorvi and Riya with their parents

It was their mother's condition that turned grave in the ICU. She collapsed on April 29. But the sisters had to hide it from their father who was battling Covid in a different ward. "I was in the ICU with my mom while *Didi* was taking care of our father. My mother held my hand tightly just before she passed away. I did her cremation alone as we did not want *Papa* to be left alone," recalls Riya. Soon, their father's condition began to deteriorate. Though the sisters tried desperately, they simply could not get an ICU bed for him. Poorvi believes had their father got an ICU bed, he might have recovered.

On May 9, he died. The sisters jointly arranged their father's cremation. "We just don't know how to cope with this situation. We have lost words to explain our feelings," says a sobbing Poorvi.

Riya, a Mass Comm graduate, had already lost her job in the wake of the Corona-induced slowdown, while Poorvi works in Noida. They don't have enough money to pay the rent of their house as the earnings of their parents had declined sharply during the pandemic.

Maha alleges scam in ventilator supply

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @Mumbai

THE ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders have alleged a big scam in the supply of ventilators under the PM Cares Fund, but the Centre has strongly refuted the claims.

Maharashtra Congress general secretary and spokesperson Sachin Sawant said a committee of medical experts appointed by the Government Medical College Aurangabad has found that the ventilators supplied to the hospital under the PM Cares Fund are "completely useless". Earlier, NCP leader Satish Chavan visited the hospital and made the same allegation.

According to the report, even company technicians who manufacture the ventilators could not fix the problem. "The supply of such ventilators should be investigated at the state level," demanded Sawant. "This is unforgivable," since public money is involved in the PM Cares Fund.

"We have reports of faulty ventilators brought via the PM Cares Fund from Nasik, Beed and Aurangabad. Many ventilators are lying unused due to non-receipt."

However, the Centre has issued a note denying the allegations. It said the Central government has been supporting the efforts of states and UTs for effective management of Covid patients in hospital care with the 'whole of government' approach.

"There have been some reports suggesting that 'Make in India' ventilators in the Aurangabad district of Maharashtra were not functioning optimally. These reports are baseless and incorrect, and are not supported by full information on the matter," stated in the note.

It further said the ventilators manufactured by Jyoti CNC were supplied to the Aurangabad Medical College. "The company is one of the manufacturers of 'Make in India' ventilators. They have supplied ventilators centrally for Covid-19 management, as per the directions of the Empowered Group. The 45 ventilators were reallocated to MGM Hospital Aurangabad by the state authorities. No formal information was provided about this to Jyoti CNC.

CM URGES SUGAR COOPERATIVES TO PRODUCE O_2

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday urged the sugar cooperative industry to produce oxygen, much needed for hospitals treating Covid patients. He was speaking after attending the virtual inauguration of an oxygen production plant of Dharashiv Sugar Cooperative in Osmanabad district. The Dharashiv sugar cooperative has converted its ethanol project into oxygen plant which would be producing six tons of oxygen with 96 per cent purity daily.

PRAYER AMID FEAR

Muslims gather to pray on the occasion of Eid al Fitr at Jama Masjid Khairuddin, Amritsar, amid the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic | PTI

AUS TO RESUME FLIGHTS

New Delhi: Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said that the temporary ban on flights from India to his country will end at midnight on May 14 with an aircraft being dispatched with Covid-19 supplies. In a Facebook post, Morrison said, "A flight packed with medical supplies and equipment to support our good friends in India took off from Sydney earlier today (Friday)."

'Reasonable for India to extend vax doses gap'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

TOP US infectious diseases expert and chief scientific adviser to US President Joe Biden, **Anthony Fauci** has said that the central government's decision to extend the gap between the two doses of Covishield vaccine is a reasonable move and would make sure that more people receive at least one dose of the vaccine.

"When you are in a very difficult situation, the way you are in India, you have to try and figure out ways to get as many people vaccinated as quickly as you can. So I believe that it is a reasonable approach to do. It is unlikely that a long delay would have a negative effect on vaccine efficacy," he said.

Fauci also urged India to collaborate with other countries to boost its vaccine production capacity. "India is one of the best vaccine producers in the world and it is important for them to use some resources for their people. It's a very very large country with a population of about 1.4 billion people. You only have a couple of percentage of the people who are fully vaccinated and over about 10 per cent or so have had at least one dose so you've got to work out arrangements with other countries, other firms at the same time as ramping up your capability of making vaccines," he said.

The top US expert's reaction comes after the Centre on Thursday decided to increase the gap between the two doses of Covishield vaccine to 12 weeks from the existing 6-8 weeks citing real-time evidence. Fauci also urged rich countries and those countries with the capability to make and distribute vaccines to be morally responsible and assist poorer countries that are not able to provide vaccines to their populace.

Police quiz Youth Cong chief over relief material

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@New Delhi

A Delhi Police Crime Branch team on Friday questioned Indian Youth Congress (IYC) president Srinivas B V over Covid-related material, including medicines and oxygen cylinders, being provided by him to people.

The team reached the IYC headquarters and questioned Srinivas for about 20 minutes and sought details of the source of his supplies.

The questioning was done following a Delhi High Court order, the police said. The court on May 4 had directed police to examine instances of politicians allegedly procuring and distributing Remdesivir in the national capital and take steps for lodging of FIR in case of an offence. BJP leaders, including East Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir and Delhi unit spokesperson Harish Khurana who have also been questioned by police in connection with the distribution of relief material, said the issue should not be politicised. "The police called me this morning and came to my office around 11.40 am. They said someone filed a petition against the politicians who are helping people and providing Covid assistance. So, based on the court direction, they have to conduct the enquiry," said Srinivas.

"We are not scared of anyone. We are not doing anything wrong, we are saving lives. We have nothing to hide. I have answered them orally and also giving a written statement," the Congress leader said. SC advocate Krishna Kumar Sharma said it's a matter of investigation and normal questioning about the procurement of Covid-related material is valid under the eyes of the law.

ID SPECIALIST

'India not the only country taken by surprise'

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @New Delhi

DR Priya Sampathkumar is an Infectious Disease specialist at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, USA. In an interview with this daily, she explains why the situation in the US cannot be compared with India and what needs to be done to prevent a potential third wave from becoming as destructive as the second. Excerpts...

What are your thoughts on the massive healthcare crisis that has arisen due the second wave in India?
The second wave in India is stressing the system to an incredible extent. Patients have been unable to access care because hospitals are overwhelmed. Outcomes in hospitals have been poor because doctors and nurses are overwhelmed and there is inadequate supply to treat this huge number of patients. There has been a lack of medicines, equipment, ventilators and even hospital beds. The most critical crisis has been the lack of oxygen. In the long term, there is going to be an issue of burnout of healthcare workers and as they are losing patients with potentially preventable deaths. Also, India's borders are fairly porous. The surge in India is definitely going to spread to other countries.

How do you see the administration's role in handling the crisis in India? What could have the governments done better but didn't?
Covid took the world by surprise and all over, governments were not prepared for this, nor the public. There were missteps in most countries. These included underestimating the problem and not messaging the problem adequately.

How do you compare the crisis management in the US and India?
This time last year, when the US was having its surges, we had the same sort of situation in New York. There were a huge number of cases, the health system was overwhelmed and the death rate was very high. The initial surge in the US was confined to New York, so it was possible to shift resources from other parts to help New York. Then there was a time in the US with lockdowns and universal masking policies, and all the regions and states were able to prepare and none of the other surges were ever as bad as New York because of preparations that medical institutions and state governments took. In India, everything is on a much larger scale because of the huge population and far lesser per capita hospital beds as compared to the US. It is hard to scale up medical preparation and prepare for dealing with Covid when over 1.3 billion are potentially at risk of infection.

Do you see a third wave of the pandemic as a possibility?
If we appropriately carry out public health messaging on how pandemics behave and send out the right messages, and on top of that carry out an aggressive vaccination drive, it will go a long way in preventing a third wave.

JUSTICE AFTER 33 YEARS

A local court in Uttar Pradesh has sentenced a woman to five years' imprisonment for helping three men abduct and rape a 12-year-old girl 33 years ago. All the other accused in the case had died during the course of the trial

20 YEAR-OLD GIRL GANG-RAPED IN HARYANA

	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	42	31	Mumbai	36	30
Bhopal	41	28	Panaji	34	25
Jaipur	38	29	Patna	33	23
Amritsar	33	21	Lucknow	38	21
Chennai	33	28	Port Blair	33	27
Kolkata	36	27	Imphal	29	17
Srinagar	23	11	Chandigarh	34	18

POST-MORTEM

RSS mouthpiece criticises BJP for fielding Trinamool turncoats

Also blames the spurt in Covid cases for the party's under-par performance in Bengal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Kolkata

THE Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has lashed out at the BJP over its decision to open the party's doors to the turncoats from the Trinamool Congress without studying their popularity among the voters of the state.

Analysing the saffron camp's dismal performance in the recently-held Assembly elections in West Bengal, the RSS, in its mouthpiece, *Organiser*, also listed the Centre's mismanagement of the Covid-19 crisis and the effectiveness of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's welfare schemes as the reasons for the saffron camp's defeat in Bengal.

The RSS, in a two-day workshop held in March in Ahmadabad, had opposed BJP's decision to welcome TMC turncoats. The party's national leadership did not pay heed to the RSS' objections back then, a senior leader of the saffron camp's West Bengal chapter said.

An article published in the *Organiser*, titled Bad Experiments in Bengal, said, "The beneficiaries created by TMC through different schemes, some BJP's wrong steps like welcoming TMC leaders without judging their strength and impact of Covid-19 on last two phases (of the elections) resulted in such decimated performance."

The RSS also pointed out the vote swing from the fold of all key parties, including the BJP, Left Front, and Congress, in favour of Mamata caused a blow to the BJP's expectations. "Only 2% reduced vote share of BJP and 5% votes of Congress+Left shifting to TMC made all the difference," the article said.

The RSS mouthpiece also criticised the BJP for not effectively managing the support from SC/ST communities. "There are four major districts where BJP did not get a single seat like in Jhargram (4 seats), South 24 Pargana (31 seats), Purba Bardhaman (16 seats), and Kolkata (11 seats). In Jungle Mahal area where there are total 51 seats, BJP got only 17 seats. It clearly shows that BJP did not manage effectively the support of SC and ST. From the Matua community also, the BJP did not get full support and it is still a matter of research how this community voted but it is certain, every community gave the priority of benefits received from TMC overall caste and religion-based appeals. It is only the Jalpaiguri region where BJP performed well, got 21 seats out of total 27 seats."

The report noted that the pandemic may have affected the BJP's performance in the last two phases. "BJP performed poorly in last two phases, maybe due to Covid-19 pandemic. If we compare with 2019 situations, there are 65 seats where BJP won in both elections, 12 seats where BJP lost in 2019 but won in 2021 but 56 seats where BJP won in 2019 and now lost in 2021."

Muslim-majority Malerkotla town to be Punjab's 23rd dist: Amarinder

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

MALERKOTLA, Punjab's only Muslim-majority town, was on Friday declared a separate district on the occasion of Eid. The town, which was part of the Sangrur district, will now be the state's 23rd district.

The town was established in 1454 by Sheikh Sadruddin-i-Jahan from Afghanistan and subsequently, the State of Malerkotla was established in 1657 by Bayazid Khan. Malerkotla was later merged with other nearby princely states to create the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU). During the reorganisation of states in 1956, the territory of the erstwhile State of Malerkotla became part of Punjab.

The sub-divisions of Malerkotla and Ahmedgarh, as well as the sub-tehsil of Amargarh, will come under the newly-created district. The process of bringing villages under the jurisdiction of Malerkotla district would begin later, after the conclusion of the census operations, Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh said.

He has directed the Sangrur deputy commissioner to find a suitable building to immediately start the functioning of the district administration office. The deputy commissioner for the newly carved out district would be appointed soon, the CM said.

Amarinder also announced a slew of development projects for the historic city. One of them is a new medical college to be set up at a cost of ₹500 crore. It will be named after Nawab Sher Mohammed Khan. The state government has allotted 25 acres of land for the college and a sum of ₹50 crore has already been sanctioned for this purpose.

Another project is a government college for women. With women in Malerkotla having to travel long distances to obtain a quality education, the new college will come as a relief for many. Further, in a boost for public transport, a new bus stand will be constructed at a cost of ₹10 crore.

Centre delaying fund transfer to farmers: Didi

AS farmers in West Bengal received the first instalment of funds under the PM-KISAN scheme on Friday, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee hit out at the Centre, accusing it of dilly-dallying over the transfer of funds to beneficiaries in the state.

In an open letter to farmers, Banerjee also said the decision to extend the benefits of the scheme to eligible farmers in Bengal was a result of her government's continuous fight.

"In 2018, the West Bengal government had started the Krishak Bandhu scheme which went on to become a model for the entire country.

"After this in 2019, the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi was launched. Comparatively, the state-run programme is better because it offers more benefits to farmers... we are planning to add more to our scheme in the near future," she said.

PM Narendra Modi on Friday released the eighth instalment of over ₹20,000 crore to 9.5 crore farmer beneficiaries under the scheme.

About 7.03 lakh farmers of the state received the first instalment of ₹2,000 in their bank accounts, Modi said.

Meanwhile, the West Bengal Home Department later said the state was not invited to be a part of the PM's event. "It is clarified that West Bengal did not receive any invitation for the PM Kisan fund release programme today," the department tweeted.

"Due to demand and actions of CM and GOWB, 7 lakh farmers of West Bengal got their due entitlement, the first instalment of Kisan Samman Nidhi today by direct transfer as per data submitted by State. State will fight for its farmers," it added. *PTI*

'WE CONSIDER TODAY'S SNUB AS AN INSULT'

A source in the West Bengal Home Department said the Centre not sending invites to events like PM Kisan fund release programme has become a common practice. "The Bengal government considers today's snub as an insult as there were representatives of other states," he said. Under the programme, the Centre is providing `6,000 in three equal installments to 14 crore farmers each year.

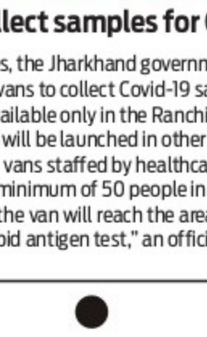
BALANCING ACT

A girl playfully hangs on a stick as a counterbalance to a can of water as a man fetches it for domestic use in Kolkata | PTI

NIA nabs militant wanted over attack on forces

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@New Delhi

THE National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday arrested Mayanglambam Siromani, a self-styled lieutenant of the outlawed People's Liberation Army/Revolutionary People's Front, over his alleged involvement in an ambush that killed one of Assam Rifles' personnel in Manipur.



The 32-year old Siromani of Manipur's Kakching district was arrested by the anti-terror wing of the agency in Manipur. He had fled India and had taken shelter in Myanmar after the ambush, officials said.

The ambush on a road-opening party of the fourth Assam Rifles at Chamol-Sajik Tampak Road in Manipur's Chandel in 2017 killed one member of the Assam Rifles and another injured. Two terrorists were also killed in the encounter.

Militants carried out the ambush on November 15, 2017 when the Assam Rifles team was conducting a road-opening task on the Chamol-Sajir Tampak road in the state's Chandel district.

In a statement, the anti-terror agency said that its probe has established that the militants conspired to wage war against the Government of India, and in furtherance of this conspiracy, they ambushed the Assam Rifles team.

According to the agency, Siromani was involved in the conspiracy. He was charge-sheeted while being on the run. He was declared a proclaimed offender by the agency and a cash reward of ₹2 lakh was announced for information leading to his arrest.

Siromani was an active operative in the 252 mobile battalion of PLA/RPF based in Myanmar. He along with his co-accused had escaped after the ambush to Myanmar. The accused was produced before a special NIA court in Imphal and taken on a police remand for five days. Further probe is on, sources said.

Three history-sheeters killed in UP jail gang war

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Lucknow

THREE big time criminals were killed in a major gang war inside Uttar Pradesh's high-security Chitrakoot district jail on Friday morning.

Two of them, Meraj alias Bhai Meraj and Mukim alias Kala were shot dead by fellow inmate Anshu Dixit around 10 am. Dixit was later gunned down by a local police team and officials, led by the district magistrate and police superintendent who rushed to the spot, after he opened fire on them.

"Dixit shot dead Meraj and Kala, and held some of the other prisoners at gunpoint and threatened to kill them. He was later killed in the exchange of fire with police," IG, Chitrakoot Range, K Satyanarain said.

All three ganglords were housed in the high-security barrack of the Chitrakoot jail. The police confirmed they were hardened criminals.

The slain Kala, a gangster from West UP — wanted in over 60 cases of murder, loot and other organised crimes in UP, Haryana and Uttarakhand — had been shifted from Saharanpur jail to Chitrakoot just last week on May 7.

Bhai Meraz, an accused in 14 cases, including murder, drug smuggling and extortion in Varanasi and Rae Bareli districts of UP, was shifted from Varanasi jail to Chitrakoot on March 20, while Anshu Tripathi (wanted in many cases in UP and Bhopal) had been shifted from Rae Bareli jail to Chitrakoot in December 2019, after his video threatening people over phone from jail premises had gone viral.

Of the three slain inmates, Meraj was the crucial link between two other high-profile UP gangsters – Mukhtar Ansari (also a BSP MLA shifted recently from a Punjab jail to Banda jail in UP) and Prem Prakash alias Munna Bajrangi. The latter was shot dead by a fellow jail inmate at Baghpat jail in UP in July 2018.

Bajrangi's liquidation in an alleged gang war was the last big killing in a UP jail before Friday's shootout. Nearly three years later, one his close aides Meraj has been gunned down.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said a joint team of Divisional Commissioner D K Singh and IG, Chitrakoot and DIG (prison) Sanjeev Tripathi will submit a report in this regard.

Many challenges to meet jab targets

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

TO meet the target of 55 crore doses of Covaxin in five months, 3.7 million doses will have to be produced each day, Ramakumar pointed out, wondering how would it be possible, given that the three undertakings the government has tied up with for production, will not start Covaxin operations before 8-12 months.

Vrati said, given that the undertakings roped in, including BIBCOL, a firm which has no experience of vaccine manufacturing, it may take 36—not six-months—before it can start rolling out the vaccine. "Even if the work starts on war footing now to create biosafety level 3 labs in these companies, required for Covaxin production, it may take at least six months for the vaccine batches to roll out from these plants," he said.

It's not only the experts who are raising doubts. The Union government, in an affidavit to the Supreme Court last week, had said that Covaxin production per day will rise from 0.3 million doses to 3.3 million "in the next 8-10 months". As for the other vaccines on the wishlist, they are yet to even prove their efficacy. "These vaccine candidates first need to show trial results and get regulatory approvals based on evidence," said K Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India. On whether the promise of enough vaccines for all by the year-end is feasible, Reddy said: "The Centre must have had a discussion with makers before coming up with projections, so we will have to wait and see."

EXPRESS READ

BJP puts pressure on Maha govt over quota

Mumbai: The BJP on Friday demanded that the Maharashtra government announce a `3,000 crore package to provide educational facilities and scholarships to the Maratha community on the lines of the assistance given to those from the OBC category. Speaking to reporters in Kolhapur, the party's Maharashtra unit chief Chandrakant Patil said the previous government had proposed a formula to treat the Maratha community at par with the Other Backward Classes

BSF recovers AK-47 dropped by Pak drone

Srinagar: The BSF on Friday recovered an AK-47 rifle, a pistol and some ammunition dropped by a Pakistani drone from the border belt of Samba district in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The drone is suspected to have flown back into the Pakistani territory after it dropped the consignment, officials said. Congratulating the troops, IG, BSF Jammu, N S Jamwal termed the recovery as a "big achievement", and said the force is ever alert on the border to thwart away the nefarious designs of Pakistan

Mobile vans to collect samples for Covid testing

Amid a surge in Covid cases, the Jharkhand government on Tuesday decided to deploy mobile vans to collect Covid-19 samples from people. As of now, the facility is available only in the Ranchi district. In the next couple of days, the service will be launched in other districts. As per the decision taken, the mobile vans staffed by healthcare professionals will visit residential areas. If a minimum of 50 people in a locality want to have Covid-19 tests done, the van will reach the area. "The testing van will be equipped with a rapid antigen test," an official said.

RANCHI DIARY

MUKESH RANJAN
Our correspondent in Jharkhand
mukesh.r@newindianexpress.com

Pvt hosps in Jharkhand told to have own oxygen plants

Private hospitals in Jharkhand will now have to ensure that they have their own oxygen plants. A letter has been issued by Additional Chief Secretary (Health) to all Deputy Commissioners in the state, directing them to ensure that medical oxygen plants are set up in all private hospitals with at least 50 beds in their jurisdiction. In case of a shortage in oxygen supply, the hospital administration will be held responsible, the letter said. The letter also stated that many private hospitals have circular arrangements for using and refilling oxygen cylinders, which is not an ideal strategy in long run. Moreover, in case of any contingency on the supply-side due to a technical fault or other issues, this may lead to a disaster for which the hospital administration will be liable and responsible, it stated.

Central Coalfields Limited posts record production

The Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) has registered an unprecedented growth of 113 per cent in coal production in April 2021 compared to April 2020. The production went up from 2.28 million tons in April 2020 to 4.84 million tons in April 2021. Similarly, there has also been a significant jump of 122% in coal offtake—the amount of coal supplied from the coal pitheads—in April 2021 compared to the corresponding period last year. Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of CCL, PM Prasad has constantly been monitoring the mining activities through virtual meetings with the Area General Managers.

Govt directs officials to ensure safety of orphans

Chief Minister Hemant Soren has directed all district administration officials to ensure that children, who lost their parents to the coronavirus, are getting proper care. The direction has been given considering the possibility that such children may face exploitation or get picked up by child-traffickers. The 'Child Care Helpline', numbers issued by respective district administrations, will be monitored by the District Welfare Officers, which has a dedicated team to look into such cases. Anyone, who knows about such children, have been urged to report their details to the helpline number.

GLOBAL WEATHER

LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	20	14	LR	Los Angeles	21	14	LC
Colombo	31	26	TDS	Melbourne	13	7	LR
Dhaka	34	27	TDS	Moscow	22	13	LR
Dubai	38	27	SNY	New York	23	13	SNY
Houston	28	22	LC	Singapore	31	27	TDS
Istanbul	26	16	SNY	Toronto	18	8	LC
London	14	8	LR	Washington	22	9	LC

PALESTINIANS FLEE AS ISRAELI ARTILLERY POUNDS GAZA

Tanks on border, warplanes carry out intense barrage on northern end of Gaza Strip; Hamas strikes back with hundreds of rockets

GAZA CITY

THOUSANDS of Palestinians grabbed children and belongings and fled their homes on Friday as Israel barraged the northern Gaza Strip with tank fire and airstrikes, killing a family of six in their house and heavily damaging other neighborhoods in what it said was an operation to clear militant tunnels.

As international efforts at a cease-fire stepped up, Israel appeared to be looking to inflict intensified damage on Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip and has fired hundreds of rockets into Israel. The Gaza violence increasingly spilled over into turmoil elsewhere.

Across the West Bank, Palestinians held their most widespread protests since 2017, with hundreds in at least nine towns burning tires and throwing stones at Israeli troops.

Within Israel, communal violence erupted for a fourth night. Jewish and Arab mobs clashed in the flashpoint town of Lod, even after additional security forces were deployed.

In Gaza, the toll from the fighting rose to 122 killed, including 31 children and 20 women, with 900 wounded, according to the Health Ministry. Seven people have been killed in Israel, including a 6-year-old boy and a soldier. Israel called up 9,000 reservists on Thursday to join its troops massed at the Gaza border, and an army spokesman spoke of a possible ground assault into the densely populated territory, though he gave no timetable. A day later, there was no sign of an incursion. But before dawn Friday, tanks deployed on the border and warplanes carried out an intense barrage on the northern end of the Gaza Strip.

Lt Col Jonathan Conricus, an Israeli military spokesman, said the operation involved tank fire and airstrikes, aimed at destroying a tunnel network beneath Gaza City that the military refers to as 'the Metro', used by militants to evade surveillance and airstrikes. "As always, the aim is to strike military targets and to minimise collateral damage and civilian casualties," he said.

When the sun rose, residents streamed out of the area in pickup trucks, on donkeys and on foot, taking pillows, blankets, pots and pans and bread.

Adnan Abu Hasna, a spokesman for UNRWA, said thousands broke into 16 schools run by the relief agency, which he said was scrambling to find a way to shelter them, given movement restrictions on its staff amid the fighting and Covid-19 worries.

Meanwhile, Hamas showed no signs of backing down. So far, it has fired some 1,800 rockets toward Israel, some targeting the seaside metropolis of Tel Aviv, although more than a quarter of them have fallen short inside Gaza and most of the rest have been intercepted by missile defense systems. *AP*

TOLL GOES UP

119 The toll from the fighting has risen to 119, says the Gaza Health Ministry. This includes 31 children and 19 women

Hamas and Islamic Jihad militant groups confirmed 20 deaths in their ranks, though Israel says that number is much higher

7 people have been killed in Israel, including a 6-year-old boy and a soldier

Smoke billows from a building after an Israeli strike, in Gaza City on Friday | AFP

Palestinian death toll in West Bank rises

Jerusalem: The number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank has risen to 10. The Israeli army says one was killed after attempting to stab a soldier. Palestinian health officials confirmed that death and said nine other Palestinians were killed by Israeli army fire in the occupied West Bank. The health ministry said five were killed in stone-throwing clashes with Israeli forces in several locations.

Conflict with Hamas in Gaza not over yet: Netanyahu

Jerusalem: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Friday that Israel had no plans on relenting in its attacks against Hamas in Gaza, after heavy bombardment targeting the Islamists in the Palestinian enclave. "They attacked our capital, they fired rockets at our cities. They're paying and will continue to pay dearly for that," he said following security consultations at the military's headquarters in Tel Aviv. *AFP*

OLI TAKES OATH AS NEPAL PM, RETAINS PREVIOUS CABINET

KATHMANDU

KP SHARMA Oli, heading a minority government, was sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister on Friday, four days after the embattled leader lost a crucial vote of confidence in Parliament. President Bidya Devi Bhandari administered the oath of office and secrecy to Oli as the prime minister at a scaled-down ceremony at Shital Niwas, the presidential palace.

The 69-year-old chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal-(Unified Marxist-Leninist) was reappointed as prime minister by the president in his capacity as leader of the largest political party in Nepal's House of Representatives. Oli will head a minority government as he does not enjoy a majority in Parliament after losing the vote of confidence on Monday. He was reappointed to the post on Thursday night as the Opposition parties failed to secure majority seats in Parliament to form a new government.

Oli will now have to take a vote of confidence at the House within 30 days, failing which, an attempt to form a government under Article 76 (5) of the Constitution would be initiated by the President.

The ministers of Oli's Cabinet were also sworn in during the ceremony.

During the oath-taking ceremony, Prime Minister Oli and Deputy Prime Minister Ishwar Pokharel did not mention the word God though President Bhandari had mentioned it. "I will take oath in the name of the country and the people," Oli said, while President Bhandari had mentioned "God, country and the people". All the ministers and ministers of state from the old Cabinet have been included in the new Cabinet.

Pradeep Gyawali has been reappointed as Foreign Minister while Ram Bahadur Thapa and Bishnu Poudyal were appointed as ministers for Home and Finance.

The oath-taking ceremony was kept brief keeping in mind the raging Covid-19 pandemic in the country. Vice-President Nanda Bahadur Pun and Supreme Court Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana were among the distinguished personalities who attended the ceremony. *PTI*

Japan expands virus emergency ahead of Tokyo Olympics

TOKYO

Yoshihide Suga | AFP

JAPAN on Friday further expanded a coronavirus state of emergency from six areas, including Tokyo, to nine, as Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga repeated his determination to hold the Olympics in just over two months.

Japan has been struggling to slow infections ahead of the games. The three additions are Japan's northern island of Hokkaido, where the Olympic marathon will be held, and Hiroshima and Okayama in western Japan.

Despite the worsening infections, Suga stressed his commitment to holding the games safely and securely while protecting Japanese by strictly controlling the movements of foreign participants, including possibly expelling journalists covering the event if they defy regulations.

"I understand there are various difficulties, but the priority is to stop the further spread of infections and protect the people's lives and health," Suga said.

The three additional areas will join Tokyo, Osaka and four other prefectures already under the emergency coronavirus restrictions through May 31, Suga announced at a government taskforce meeting Friday.

Bars, karaoke parlors and most entertainment facilities are required to close. Business owners who comply will be compensated; those who don't could face fines. *AP*

Signature campaign

On Friday, organisers of a petition demanding the cancellation of the Olympics submitted more than 350,000 signatures to Tokyo Gov Yuriko Koike. The petition says money spent on the games would be better used on people in financial need because of the pandemic.

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd

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Jayanagar Branch : Office No. 180, Amrutha, 5th Main, 4th Block West, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560011, (Karnataka).
Kengeri Branch : Site No 1107, 2nd Floor, 1st Main Road, Kengeri Satellite Town, Opposite to Dominos, Kengeri - 560060. (Karnataka).
K R Puram Branch : Office No. 1218, 2nd Floor, Pooja Complex, Old Madras Road, K R Puram, Bangalore - 560036, (Karnataka).
Malleshwaram Branch : Office No. 284, 2nd Floor, 17th & 18th Cross, Sampige Road, Malleshwaram, Bangalore - 560 003, (Karnataka).
Nelamangala Branch : 1st floor, Katha No. 658/A, Vinayaka Nagar, Arishinakunte, Near Honda Showroom, Nelamangala, Bangalore - 562123, (Karnataka).
Whitefield Branch : Office No. 1218, 2nd Floor, Pooja Complex, Old Madras Road, K R Puram, Bangalore - 560036 (Karnataka).
Yelahanka Branch : #293, 2nd Floor, SMK Complex, Ist Main Road, Chikkabommasandra Circle, Yelahanka New Town, Bangalore - 560064, (Karnataka).
Mandya Branch : No. 1978/C, 1st Floor, Kempaiah Building, R P Road, 3rd Cross, Near Guru Bhavana, Subashnagar, Mandya - 571401, (Karnataka)

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.(AHFL) under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the following Borrower(s) (the "said Borrower(s)"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s)to pay to AHFL, within 60 days from the publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said Demand Notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to AHFL by the said Borrower(s) respectively.

Sl No.	Name of the Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower / Guarantor (s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of the Immovable property
1.	(Appl No.**00247664 Bommanahalli Branch**) **Basavaraj Japal** (Borrower) **Shilpa Basavaraj** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 13,03,727.00	Sy No. 27/4, Neralur Village, Athibele Hobli, Anekal Tk, Bengaluru - 560100, Karnataka.
2.	(Appl No.**V0115354 Jayanagar Branch**) **Syed Arshad** (Borrower) **Syed Anwarj** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 12,27,132.00	No 21, Khalandaria Manzil, 2nd, Cross, Brindavan, Opp to 9th Cross, ITI Colony, K R Puram, Bengaluru - 560036, Karnataka
3.	(Appl No.**V0132790 Jayanagar Branch**) **Srinath S L** (Borrower) **Kavitha Srinath** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 60,77,281.00	Item No.37, Pid No.63-157-37, Old No. 14/2, No.75/1, Situated At 7th Cross, Bhavani Layout, Thavarekere. 35/58th Div, Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka.
4.	(Appl No.**00282934 Jayanagar Branch**) **Puttu Rao** (Borrower) **Hanumantha Rao P** (1st Co Borrower) **Prema Bai** (2nd Co Borrower) **Gundu Rao** (3rd Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 20,11,749.00	No.24 and 25, K No.52/1, Gramatana Serial No.3481, Thavarekere Village and Hobli , Bengaluru - 562130, Karnataka.
5.	(Appl No.**V0130376 Jayanagar Branch**) **Srinath S L** (Borrower) **Kavitha Srinath** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 50,27,989.00	Item No.37, Pid No.63-157-37, Old No 14/2 and 75/1, Situated at 7th Cross, Bhavani Layout, Thavarekere, 35/58th Div, Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka.
6.	(Appl No.**V0127813 Jayanagar Branch**) **Elumalai M** (Borrower) **Thilaka E** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 15,45,984.00	Property Bearing Site No.49 Katha No.48, New BBMP Property No.48/36/4, Sy No.36/4, Chelkere Village, K R Pura Hobli, Bengaluru - 560036, Karnataka.
7.	(Appl No.**V0141055 Jayanagar Branch**) **Manjunath U J** (Borrower) **Anitha P** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 8,94,531.00	Sy No.45/1, Site No.1, Sri Ram Badavane, Pillahalli Village, Hoskur Village Panchayat, Dasanapura Hobli, Bengaluru - 562123, Karnataka.
8.	(Appl No.**V0124818 Jayanagar Branch**) **Gowramma S** (Borrower) **Siddarajaiah H S** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 3,71,420.00	Site No.13, Asst No.38/1 of, Dodda bidarekallu Village, Yashwanthpura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bengaluru - 560073, Karnataka.
9.	(Appl No.**V0126129 Jayanagar Branch**) **Dinakaran R** (Borrower) **Uma N** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 35,64,018.00	Site No.50, Khatha No.77/56/50, Sy No.56, Kowdenahalli Village, Krishnarajapuram Hobli, Bangalore East, Bengaluru - 560016, Karnataka.
10.	(Appl No.**V0137421 Kengeri Branch**) **Shruthi G** (Borrower) **Vikram Babu S** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 14,76,733.00	Site No.21, Sy No.36/3 and 36/8, Bettahalli Village, Dasanapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bengaluru - 562130, Karnataka.
11.	(Appl No.**V0135948 Kengeri Branch**) **Thara B T** (Borrower) **Maruthi P** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 22,43,533.00	Site No.103, 5th Main, Srigandada Kavalu, Katha No.71, Annapoorneshwari Nagar Laggere, Bengaluru - 560058, Karnataka.
12.	(Appl No.**00235572 Kengeri Branch**) **Lakshmimanjula S** (Borrower) **Shiva Kumar S** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 11,79,317.00	Site No.99, Sy No.14, Varthur Narasimhapura Village, Thavarakere Hobli, Magadi Taluk, Bengaluru - 562130, Karnataka.
13.	(Appl No.**V0138681 Kengeri Branch**) **Kuppuswamy C** (Borrower) **Chitra P** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 17,34,332.00	Site No.27 & 28, Sy No.99/1, Sulivara Village, Tavarekere, Bengaluru - 562130, Karnataka.
14.	(Appl No.**00219101 Kengeri Branch**) **Raghupathi C** (Borrower) **Shashikala R** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 11,89,806.00	Site No.79, Sy No.14, Varthur Narsipura Village, Thavarakere Hobli, Bengaluru - 562130, Karnataka.
15.	(Appl No.**00312038 Kengeri Branch**) **Kariyappa J** (Borrower) **Susheela K** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 21,81,714.00	Northern Portion of Site No.25, Ass.No.6/3, Katha No.395, Andrahalli Village, BBMP Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bengaluru - 560091, Karnataka.
16.	(Appl No.**V0135958 Kengeri Branch**) **Thara B T** (Borrower) **Maruthi P** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 10,10,120.00	Site No.103, 5th Main, Srigandada Kavalu, Annapoorneshwari Nagar Laggere, Bengaluru - 560058, Karnataka.
17.	(Appl No.**00230749 K R PuramBranch**) **Penchalaiah D** (Borrower) **Ramanamma P** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 8,37,849.00	Site No.12, New V P Khatha No.17/4B, Situated at Doddabettahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North, Bengaluru - 560097, Karnataka.
18.	(Appl No.**V0140035 K R Puram Branch**) **Penchalaiah D** (Borrower) **Ramanamma P** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 16,26,284.00	Site No.12, New V P Khatha No.17/4B, Situated at Doddabettahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North, Bengaluru - 560097, Karnataka.
19.	(Appl No.**00187310 K R Puram Branch**) **Pushpa R** (Borrower) **Anthonyammal G** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 21,59,930.00	Site No.10, Khatha No.29/3/52, Property No.53, Devasandra Village, K R Puram Hobli, Bengaluru - 560036, Karnataka.
20.	(Appl No.**V0101718 Malleshwaram Branch**) **Late.Santosh Kumar** (Borrower) (Represented through the legal heir) **Pinky Lepcha** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 15,83,504.00	#2350, K.No.48/50, Kithaganur Village, Bidarahalli Hobli, New City Regency, Bangalore East Taluk, KR Puram, Bengaluru - 560049, Karnataka.
21.	(Appl No.**00223677 Malleshwaram Branch**) **Lokesh C** (Borrower) **Komala M** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 21,36,702.00	Southern Portion of Site No.2, Hali K.No.2536, Asst No.78/1, Srigandadakavalu Village, YPR, Bengaluru - 560058, Karnataka.
22.	(Appl No.**V0102710 Malleshwaram Branch**) **Kumar Raju** (Borrower) **Rukmini** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 12,76,092.00	Flat No.103, G R V Residency, I Floor, Sy.No.43/4P, Kodigehalli, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bengaluru - 560092, Karnataka.
23.	(Appl No.**00290059 Malleshwaram Branch**) **Late.Konamma P** (Borrower) (Represented through the legal heir) **Obalappa C** (1st Co Borrower) **Vasanthakumar O** (2nd Co Borrower) **Obalapathi O** (3rd Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 10,13,611.00	Khata No 576, Sri Gandadakaval Grama, Yeshwanthpura Hobli, Bengaluru - 560091, Karnataka.
24.	(Appl No.**V0105942 Malleshwaram Branch**) **Thimmaraju T V** (Borrower) **Veena T T** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 1,71,828.00	Site No.64, Khata No.499, Sy No.46/2, Mallapura Village, Kasaba Hobli, Nelamangala, Bengaluru - 562123, Karnataka.
25.	(Appl No.**00286857 Malleshwaram Branch**) **Sharadha T K** (Borrower) **Srinivasamuthy G Y** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 17,49,309.00	Katha No.302/45/4/1, Gollahalli Village, Nelamangala Taluk, Bengaluru - 562123, Karnataka.
26.	(Appl No.**00225992 Malleshwaram Branch**) **Kumar Raju R** (Borrower) **Rukmini Raju** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 4,53,294.00	No.103, GRV Residency, 4th Main, Balaji Layout, Nagashettyhalli, Bengaluru - 560094, Karnataka.
27.	(Appl No.**V0139666 Nelamangala Branch**) **Manjamma R** (Borrower) **Ramesh B V** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 11,16,197.00	Site No : 106, Khatha No : 24/106, Property No-24, Priyanka Nagar, Seegehalli, Bengaluru - 560049, Karnataka.
28.	(Appl No.**V0143642 Nelamangala Branch**) **Muniraju K M** (Borrower) **Eramma G** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 30,60,180.00	Site No.1, Old Katha No.393, Present Katha No.314/8/1/1, Kempapura Village, Bengaluru - 560024, Karnataka.
29.	(Appl No.**00208105 Nelamangala Branch**) **Yallappa K B** (Borrower) **Veenakumari C** (Co Borrower)	16-04-2021 ₹ 17,99,705.00	Site No.11, Katha No.86/11, Kodathi Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bengaluru - 560035, Karnataka.
30.	(Appl No.**V0140774 Nelamangala Branch**) **Mahesh N** (Borrower) **Narayana Reddy C** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 42,55,624.00	Site No : 3, Khatha No : 74/1, Munekolala Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Tq, Bengaluru - 560037, Karnataka.
31.	(Appl No.**00190141 Nelamangala Branch**) **Manjunath J** (Borrower) **Chaithra M** (1st Co Borrower) **Jayaramu V** (2nd Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 8,38,728.00	Site No.94, Village Katha No.64, B M Kaval Village, Agara Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bengaluru - 560062, Karnataka.
32.	(Appl No.**00255322 Nelamangala Branch**) **Ramesh S** (Borrower) **Annapurna S** (Co Borrower)	16-04-2021 ₹ 17,44,117.00	Site No 45, S No.8/1, New Sy N0.8/1A, Huluvenahalli Village, Tavarekera Hubli, Banglore South, Bengaluru - 562130, Karnataka.
33.	(Appl No.**00285590 Nelamangala Branch**) **Sheshamma N** (Borrower) **Ravi K N** (Co Borrower)	16-04-2021 ₹ 10,46,990.00	Pattana Panchayathi Kaneshmari No.6792, 15, Nelamangala Town, Nelamangala Taluk, Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru - 562123, Karnataka.
34.	(Appl No.**00181024 Nelamangala Branch**) **Gopala H** (Borrower) **Lalitha G** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 12,21,158.00	Katha No.37, Site No.58, Agara Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bagalore South Taluk, Bengaluru - 560060, Karnataka.
35.	(Appl No.**D1324981 Nelamangala Branch**) **Yegneshwar M C** (Borrower) **Asha R** (Co Borrower)	16-04-2021 ₹ 11,67,370.00	Site No 13, Southern Portion, Sy No.61, Jarakabande Kaval Village, Yelaahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bengaluru - 560097, Karnataka.
36.	(Appl No.**V0136499 Nelamangala Branch**) **Nandini N Acharya** (Borrower) **Lokesh Acharya** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 15,29,502.00	Portion of Property No.70, Assessment No.102, Katha No.36, Lakshmipura Village, Dasanpura Hobli, Bengaluru North, Bengaluru - 562123, Karnataka.
37.	(Appl No.**00175443 Nelamangala Branch**) **Sharadadevi K** (Borrower) **Ashok Kumar S** (Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 5,75,996.00	Khatha No.93/91/1P, Huskuru Village, Kesturu Grama Panchayath, Doddabelavangal Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru - 561203, Karnataka.
38.	(Appl No.**00251129 Nelamangala Branch**) **Manjunath J** (Borrower) **Chaithra M** (1st Co Borrower) **Jayaramu V** (2nd Co Borrower)	15-04-2021 ₹ 4,15,549.00	Site No.94, Village Katha No. 64, B M Kaval Village, Agara Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bengaluru - 560062, Karnataka.
39.	(Appl No.**00290256 Nelamangala Branch**) **Sreenivasa K** (Borrower) **Kavya A K** (Co Borrower)	16-04-2021 ₹ 4,28,400.00	Site No.41, Survey No.37 & 36/3, Manchenahalli Soladevanahalli Panchayat, Kasaba Hobli, Nelamangala, Bengaluru - 562123, Karnataka.
40.	(Appl No.**00290292 Nelamangala Branch**) **Srinivas N** (Borrower) **Jayamma D** (Co Borrower)	16-04-2021 ₹ 4,18,654.00	Site No 64, Survey No.37 & 36/3, Manchenahalli Village, Kasaba Hobli, Nelamangala, Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru - 562123, Karnataka.
41.	(Appl No.**00240599 Nelamangala Branch**) **Prasannakumar H** (Borrower) **Dakshayanamma R C** (Co Borrower)	16-04-2021 ₹ 21,36,525.00	Site No 13, Hesaragatta Hobli, Hurulichikana Halli Village, Bengaluru North Taluk, Bengaluru - 560088, Karnataka.
42.	(Appl No.**00223682 Whitefield Branch**) **Ampayya Manikayam** (Borrower) **Padmavathi A** (Co Borrower) **Kaleem Pasha** (Guarantor)	16-04-2021 ₹ 19,34,560.00	Site No.5, Rose Petals Layout, Harappanahalli Village, Behind Tapovan, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru - 562106, Karnataka.
43.	(Appl No.**00188731 Whitefield Branch**) **Parvathi M** (Borrower) **Manjunath A** (Co Borrower)	16-04-2021 ₹ 21,67,171.00	Site No. 47, Old Khatha No. 1096, Sy.No.52/1, Ckikkajala Village, Jala Hobli, Bengaluru - 562157, Karnataka.
44.	(Appl No.**V0140318 Whitefield Branch**) **Mangusingh R** (Borrower) **Pavana M** (Co Borrower)	16-04-2021 ₹ 17,20,257.00	Property No.148/4/58, BBMP B Khatha, Sl No 1024, Devasandra Village, K R Puram Hobli, Bengaluru - 560036, Karnataka.
45.	(Appl No.**D1083039 Yelahanka Branch**) **Chithra Gowda R** (Borrower) **Krishnamurthy** (Co Borrower)	16-04-2021 ₹ 7,48,014.00	Site No. 120, Khata No.484/40/3/76, Kenchanakuppe Village, Bidadi Hobli, Ramanagar, Bengaluru - 562109, Karnataka.
46.	(Appl No.**00180384 Mandya Branch**) **Shruthi S** (Borrower) **Sunilkumar H C** (Co Borrower) **B Janardhana** (Guarantor)	15-04-2021 ₹ 19,32,167.00	No.302/61, Site No.61, Sannagatta Village, Channapatna Taluk, Ramanagar District, Bengaluru - 571501, Karnataka.

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to AHFL as aforesaid, AHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks of the said Borrowers as to the costs and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of AHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Place: Bangalore
Date : 15.5.2021

Authorised Officer
Aadhar Housing Finance Limited

Market Watch

MARKET			GOLD			SILVER			FOREX		
41.75 ▲	Sensex	48,732.5	₹13 ▲	24 carat (1 gm)	₹4,585	₹630 ▼	Per kg	₹70,500	▼ Dollar		73.28
18.7 ▼	Nifty	14,677.8	₹13 ▲	22 carat (1 gm)	₹4,485	₹0.63 ▼	Per gm	₹70.5	▼ Euro		88.74

Go Airlines plans to raise ₹3,600 cr via IPO

On getting approval from the regulator, it will become the third operational airline to go public after Indigo and SpiceJet

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

WADIA Group-controlled Go Air, which has rebranded itself as GoFirst, has filed preliminary papers to raise as much as ₹3,600 crore through an initial public offering (IPO) in a bid to pare debt. Currently, only Indigo and SpiceJet are listed.

The budget carrier has proposed an IPO of equity shares through a 100 per cent book-building process in accordance with Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), according to its draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

The company said it is in consultation with its lead managers and may consider a pre-IPO share issue of up to ₹1,500 crore prior to filing the RHP. In that case, it said, the IPO size will be reduced. Proceeds from the issue will be used to repay all, or a portion of, certain outstanding borrowings up to ₹2,015.81 crore. As much as ₹279.26 crore will be used for replacement of letters of credit which are issued to certain aircraft lessors towards securing lease rental payments and future maintenance of aircraft with cash deposit. The company will use ₹254.93 crore for repayment of dues to Indian Oil Corporation in part or full for fuel supplied.

As of December 2020, the company's total borrowings including current maturities and vehicle loans were at ₹2,036.21 crore, and cash equivalents were at ₹11.64 crore. "We expect our financial position to be improved by this reduction in debt coupled with our cost management and reduction measure and the anticipated growth in our business.

We will continue to focus on strengthening and improving our overall capital structure to allow us to invest in the growth of our business by adding more aircraft as well as expanding our network", the company said in its DRHP.

The 15-year-old carrier seeks to raise funds as the aviation industry faces significant business as a result of the Covid-19-induced restrictions.

Go Airlines Ltd has recorded a net loss of ₹470 crore and revenues of ₹13,194 crore in the nine months ended December 31, 2020. The airline said that it has a negative net worth amounting to ₹1,916 crore.

ASIANOMICS

JAPAN

EXPORTS SEEN RISING

Japan's exports likely grew over 30 per cent y-o-y in April, the most in more than a decade, according to Reuters poll, but the base effect was a major factor after last year's steep decline due to the initial impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The world's third-largest economy has recovered largely due to solid overseas demand that has boosted output and exports, even as a resurgence of coronavirus infections are dampening consumption. Next week's key data include machinery orders and consumer and wholesale prices, as well as first-quarter GDP figures that will be released next Tuesday. Exports likely surged 31 per cent in April from a year earlier, which would mark the sharpest monthly rise since May 2010, the poll showed. Imports may have grown 8.8 per cent in April over last year, which would result in a trade surplus of 140 billion yen ($1.28 billion). A slump in global trade due to supply chain disruption from coronavirus lockdowns around the world delivered a heavy blow to Japan's trade-reliant economy in April 2020.

TAIWAN

PROPOSES $7.5 BN SPENDING AS COVID1-9 CASES RISE

Taiwan's government proposed an extra $7.5 billion in spending to help the economy deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, as it reported 13 new domestic cases amid a rare spike in infections that has spooked the stock market. Early and effective prevention steps, including largely closing its borders, succeeded in shielding Taiwan from the worst of the pandemic. The island of 24 million people has reported 1,256 infections so far, most of them imported. But markets and the government have been on edge since renewed domestic outbreaks began late last month, with 16 new domestic cases announced on Wednesday setting a record daily high. The government assured it will work to ensure the stability of the financial markets. Chu Tzer-mind, head of the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, said they were proposing another T$210 billion to add to previously announced stimulus spending worth T$420 billion, which will need parliamentary approval.

VIETNAM

INFLATION MAY RISE

Rising input costs and heating up economic activities could increase inflationary pressure in the remaining months of 2021, analysts say. In April, CPI declined by 0.04 per cent over March, but rose by 1.27 per cent over last year. This takes the average CPI growth in the first four months by 0.89 per cent – the lowest growth rate since 2016, while core inflation in the January-April period increased by 0.74 per cent. The CPI growth since early 2021 was a result of the ongoing government's management policy. Meanwhile, the country's GDP growth in Q1 remained lower-than-expected at 4.48 per cent and the government may turn to further easing of monetary and fiscal policies to boost growth in the remaining quarters. According to IHS Markit, supply constraints led to a sharp increase in input costs for Vietnamese producers during the first four months of the year. The latest data showed that input costs rose the fastest rate in over three years and manufacturers have already passed on higher input costs to their customers.

Exports treble to $30.6 bn, trade deficit widens in Apr

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

INDIA's exports saw a steep increase of 195.72 per cent to $30.63 billion in April compared to the previous year driven by sharp growth in outbound shipments across sectors including gems and jewellery, engineering goods and petroleum products.

Exports had plunged in April 2020 due to a halt in manufacturing activities during the Covid-led nationwide lockdown. According to quick estimates released by the Commerce Ministry, exports stood at $10.36 billion in the same month last year, plunging by a record 60.28 per cent and. In the financial year 2020-21, exports had posted a fall of 7.26 per cent to $290.63 billion. Meanwhile, imports also rose steadily to $45.72 billion last month as against $17.12 billion in April 2020 with the sharpest increase in petroleum products, gold, precious & semi-precious stones, edible oil and electronic goods. Trade deficit more than doubled to $15.10 billion in April 2021 from $6.76 billion in April 2020.

Admitting that April 2020 was an anomalous month, the Commerce Secretary pointed out that the export performance in April 2021 was also 17.62 per cent higher than exports in April 2019 and was in fact also more than the average of the past three years. "By any methodology you adjust the base effect, you will find that the performance in April 2021 is significantly positive," Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan said, adding recovery is happening in a manner that in certain sectors like rice and pharmaceuticals "export is far more diversified". Data showed that non-oil and non-gold imports were $28.61 billion in April 2021, recording a positive growth of 129.68 per cent, as compared to $12.46 billion last year. When compared to April 2019, non-oil and non-gold imports recorded a positive growth of 6.56 per cent in April 2021.

Positive trend

- FIEO President Sharad Kumar Saraf says 15 per cent growth on the base of April 2019 reflects a positive trend
- Exporters want the government to declare the sector as essential services.
- The need of the hour is to soon notify the RoDTEP rates
- This will help in removing uncertainty thereby aiding in bagging new contracts.

PETROL, DIESEL PRICES REACH RECORD HIGHS

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Chennai

OIL marketing companies hiked petrol and diesel prices yet again on Friday, this time by a steep 29 paise per litre for petrol and 34 paise per litre for diesel. This latest hike, the fourth such increase this week, brings the total increase in petrol and diesel prices after the end of state assembly elections to ₹1.95 per litre and ₹2.22 per litre respectively. In Delhi, the hike has brought fuel prices to yet another all-time high of ₹92.34 per litre for petrol and ₹82.95 per litre for diesel.

As for states where the incidence of Value Added Taxes (VAT) on fuel is higher, prices have already crossed the psychological ₹100 per litre mark-such as in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra. The Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan saw the costliest petrol and diesel prices in the country at ₹103.27 per litre and ₹95.70 a litre respectively. In Mumbai, petrol costs ₹98.65 per litre and diesel ₹90.11 per litre.

Indians are among the most highly taxed consumers of auto fuels in the world, with central and state taxes making up 60 per cent of the retail selling price of petrol and over 54 per cent of diesel. After the massive excise duty hikes effected last summer, the Centre levies ₹32.90 per litre of excise duty on petrol and ₹31.80 on diesel.

While crude oil prices have fallen over the past few days due to concerns arising from the high number of Covid-19 cases, the general trend over the past few months has been upward. Rise in crude in the run-up to the recent polls had been pinching OMC margins.

Govt unveils special refund, duty drawback drive to help exporters

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE indirect tax and customs department is set to kick off a special refund and drawback disposal drive between May 15 and May 31, 2021 with the objective of priority processing and disposal of all pending refund and drawback claims of exporters.

In an internal note addressed to all the principal chief commissioners of customs and central taxes, it has been said that during the special drive all pending customs refund, IGST refund and customs duty drawback claims that are pending as on 14 May 2021 would be disposed of.

The special drive has been aimed at clearing all the dues of exporters/traders, who are facing hardship due to Covid-19 situation.

The note states that the department will coordinate this Special Drive with the major trade and industry associations (especially those that cater to exporters) for their assistance including submission of required documents from their members (if a claim is pending for want of a required document).

Though the special drive has been launched to provide immediate relief to the taxpayers, there would be no laxity on due diligence. All the relevant legal provisions, notifications, circulars and instructions must be followed while processing these claims. For facilitation of exporters, all communication should be done over email, wherever email id of the applicant is available. All deficiency memos would be reviewed and refund/drawback may be considered on merit.

"This special refund drive would provide immediate benefit to numerous exporters waiting for their tax refunds from customs, including refund of duty drawbacks. The board has planned to clear the backlog of refunds in the current month only. Hope to see a similar drive being arranged for all the income taxpayers, who are currently fiddling with the tax refunds," said Delhi-based chartered accountant Rajat Mohan

MSMEs seek IBC suspension, but MCA reluctant

ANURADHA SHUKLA @ New Delhi

THE government seems to be in no mood to suspend the Insolvency process, even as smaller companies have requested the Corporate Affairs Ministry to extend the protection given to them from bankruptcy proceedings for defaults during the pandemic for another three months on account of unprecedented second Covid-19 wave.

"We have received many representations from smaller units, requesting suspension of the Insolvency proceedings. While the ministry is aware of the difficulty faced by them, at this moment there is no such consideration. There is already a provision for pre-packaged Insolvency deals, which was done after taking consultation from both banks and MSMEs," a senior official from the ministry of corporate affairs told TNIE. Last year, the government suspended bankruptcy action against corporate defaulters. But this expired on March 24 this year.

Banks and financial institutions are yet to warm up to the idea, given that the Pre Pack Insolvency Resolution Process (PPIRP) permits defaulting promoters to manage day-to-day activities of the corporate debtor. "This is problematic. This is a major hitch for the financial institutions. So mostly the concept is yet to take off," a Punjab National Bank official said.

Experts, meanwhile, are not not in favour of suspending the insolvency process. ""It is better not to suspend the IBC and to use it in an effective manner to revive corporates facing stress be it due to COVID or otherwise," said Sudhir Chandi, Director of Resurgent India. He, however, feels that the central bank can step in to relax asset classification norms for companies going under pre-pack. "All in all, it is a good tool for preservation of value of the company," he noted.

EXPRESS READ

Rates for RoDTEP likely in 2 weeks: DGFT

New Delhi: Rates for the tax refund scheme for exporters — Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) — are expected to be announced in the coming two weeks, said Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Amit Yadav at a PHDCCI webinar. He added that it is working with the finance ministry. The scheme was implemented with effect from January 1, 2021.

Bata India appoints Gunjan Shah as CEO

New Delhi: Footwear major Bata India on Friday said it has appointed Gunjan Shah, the former chief commercial officer of Britannia Industries, as its new chief executive officer. He will take over from Sandeep Kataria, who was elevated as the Global CEO of Bata Brands in November last year. Shah will join Bata in June. Based out of Gurugram, he will be at the helm of Bata's India operations.

RUPEE UNDERPERFORMS MOST MAJOR CURRENCIES

While INR remains strong against US dollar on sustained FII flow into equity market, the local currency failed to replicate the same performance against other major currencies

GOOD SAMARITANS

India Inc puts employee well-being first, steps up support

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

AS the second Covid-19 wave continues to kill thousands and infect lakhs of people across the country, a handful of companies have gone the extra mile to support stricken employees and their family during this distressing phase.

Bajaj Auto said it will continue to pay salary for two years to the family of the employee who dies due Covid-19 as well as fund the education of the children of the deceased. The medical insurance that the company provides will also get extended by five years for the dependents, the Pune-based auto major said. These benefits are over and above other life insurance benefits it offers.

"Payment of monthly salary of up to ₹2 lakh per month for 24 months, education assistance for a maximum of two children of ₹1 lakh per child per annum up to 12th standard and ₹5 lakh per annum per child for graduation will be offered under the assistance policy". This support is applicable to all permanent employees retrospectively from April 1, 2020, Bajaj Auto clarified.

Earlier in May, Mumbai-based realty major Lodha Group and Borosil and Borosil Renewables rolled out a similar programme for its employees. The Mumbai-based glassware company said that the family of its employee who loses life due to Covid-19 will continue to receive the salary for the next two years, while Lodha promised to pay 12 months salary to the family of any of its associates who dies of Covid-19 while in the service of the firm.

> **Payment of monthly salary of up to ₹2 lakh per month for 24 months, education assistance for a maximum of two children of ₹1 lakh per child per annum up to 12th standard... —Bajaj Auto**

FMCG major ITC said it will bear the medical expenses of employees who have been infected by the virus. The conglomerate has also extended a loan facility to employees to support medical treatment of certain family members owing to Covid-19 infection, who are otherwise not covered under the company's medical policy.

Several corporates have also set up medical facilities for employees and commenced in-house vaccination drives.

Rooftop solar keeps India's renewable sector chugging along

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Chennai

THE Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns in 2020-21 year may have left a dent in the renewable energy sector, but a last-quarter bounce-back led by a sharp rise in demand for roof-top solar installations has helped the country's energy mix lean further away from fossil-fuel driven sources.

According to data from clean energy think-tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), out of the 12.1 GW of power generation capacity added in India in financial year 2020-21, renewables alone constituted 7.7 GW— 64 per cent. As of the end of February 2021, renewable power plants account for a full quarter (25 per cent) of India's total installed power generation capacity at 94.4 GW, up from 23 per cent at the end of FY20. Renewables accounted for a larger share of power generation too, at 10.1 per cent of total power generated-up from 9.4 per cent in FY20.

Among renewables, "solar (grid-scale and rooftop) continues to dominate, accounting for 73 per cent (or 5.5 GW) of the capacity added in FY21," noted the report from CEEW-Centre for Energy Finance. But while grid-scale solar power projects have consistently been among the largest drivers of renewable power capacity over the past few years, the last financial year has recorded a sharp rise in rooftop solar additions too, helped along by demand from both homes and small businesses.

Renewables constitute 64% of total capacity

Data from energy think-tank Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), out of the 12.1 GW of power generation capacity added in India in financial year 2020-21, renewables alone constituted 7.7 GW or 64 per cent.

CEEW-CEF data shows that 1,809 MW of rooftop solar installations were created in FY21 (upto February) compared to just 797 MW in FY20— a 127 per cent jump. In contrast, grid-scale solar capacity additions actually fell (from 6,225 MW in FY20 to 3,773 MW in FY21) due to the disruption caused by the nationwide lockdown and subsequent delays in projects.

Private sector power firms have also observed the spike in rooftop installations, with Tata Power's CEO and MD Praveer Sinha stating during a post-earnings analysts call that the company has "seen a major uptick in orders and execution" in rooftop solar during the fourth quarter of FY21.

Sinha also told analysts that the company has partnered with SIDBI to provide credit for MSMEs seeking to install rooftop solar plants.

Real thrash Granada to keep pressure on Atletico

Real Madrid kept the pressure on Atletico Madrid by thrashing Granada 4-1 to reduce the gap to two points at the top of La Liga. A draw or defeat for Real Madrid would have given Atletico the chance to win the title on Sunday by beating Osasuna but goals from Luka Modric, Rodrygo, Alvaro Odriozola and **Karim Benzema** secured a comfortable victory.

TEAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Pandemic sheds light on mental health issues among athletes: sports psychologists

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN
@Chennai

WHEN India went into lockdown last March, it also sent the country's elite athletes into an area where they hadn't really gone before — mental health. A subject that is gaining traction among athletes of late, something unheard of in Indian Olympic sport say a decade ago. Athletes looked at this part of the training with both cynicism and scepticism.

A few of them, athletes who had already qualified for the Tokyo Games among them, started asking questions around mental health issues. It was only natural because their highly regimented world — training and competitions — had come crashing down. Two prominent sports psychologists at the time had noticed an increase in Indian athletes coming to them with complaints ranging from frustration to anxiety. Those were the first instances of some Indian athletes talking about the issue.

On Friday, Mugdha Bavare, a sports psychologist who counsels many of India's Olympians, acknowledged that the pandemic had really impacted this area. "It (emphasis on mental health) wasn't that it was not there earlier but it never came on to the surface," Bavare said during an interaction organised by the Sports Authority of India (SAI). "To some extent I would say it was a good thing because for athletes, more so for elite athletes, mental health and mental well-being is of the utmost importance. It is ignored most of the times or they prefer to ignore it most of the times. Even if athletes think something is okay with them, they tend to blame themselves."

The pandemic, Bavare opined, has taught athletes a few lessons while dealing with mental health. "Please express yourself if you are feeling emotionally unwell. In that aspect, it's given all of our athletes a chance to speak up about mental health. So, yeah, I think the pandemic has really impacted this area. It wasn't like this before 2019, I would say."

Another psychologist, Sanjana Kiran, who was also on the panel on Friday, concurred. "What Covid did was it gave our athletes time to think through. The stigma around mental health is also lighter, it's not as strong as it used to be."

It gave athletes time to self reflect because they, like the rest of the world, were living in their homes. Devoid of competitions and having a lot of time on their hands — something many elite athletes are not used to — they began to listen to themselves. That's the theory put forth by Kiran.

"The pandemic kind of brought stillness. They had a lot of time for themselves because there was no training and no competitions. It gave them time to listen to themselves. All of them became more self aware which is hardly possible otherwise with their hectic life. They now had to accept that it's okay to be afraid, to feel helpless. Mental health has been a concern since 2014-15 when Olympians started opening up about mental health. Covid gave them the space to think through."

The mystery of a raft of false positives at NCOE Bengaluru

EXPRESS NEWS CHENNAI @Chennai

EARLY this week, there was heightened anxiety and a number of worried faces inside the National Centre of Excellence at Bengaluru. The source of the worry was a significant number of positive cases among the men's hockey team, including a few of the support staff. It got to such a stage where, at least for sometime, the ones who had tested positive were sent to isolation while the ones untouched by the invisible virus began training in groups of six — according to Covid-19 protocol laid down by the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

As reported by this newspaper, the SAI, already reeling under pressure for as a number of athletes had already tested positive inside the Green Zone — a place exclusively meant for athletes and their closest contacts — ordered immediate retests. The SAI officials were quietly confident that they were all false positives and hoped for a more positive outcome. It's also understood that a few of the players who had had false positives were vaccinated days before. Even the athletes, who returned positive after the first lot of nine. However, on Thursday and Friday, SAI breathed a sigh of relief when all barring one returned negative on the RT-PCR retests.

The SAI acknowledged this sequence of positive-negative-positive-negative tests in a press release on Friday. "21 out of 22 athletes who tested Covid + return negative on retest," the body said. "Health of a positive athlete being monitored."

What happens at the Olympics?

This brings to the fore is not just the spate of false positives at the NCOE in Bangalore but also the elephant in the room: what happens when athletes return false positive hours before their matches at the Tokyo Games? The International Olympic Committee (IOC), in the playbook for athletes, will first test athletes using the Rapid Antigen Test (RAT). Now, RAT has a lower sensitivity than RT-PCR that's why the latter is considered the gold standard. However, if RAT throws up a false positive or if it's inconclusive, the athlete will have to undergo further tests to eliminate the possibility. The athlete is immediately taken to a Covid-19 Clinic in the Village for a confirmatory PCR test via nasopharyngeal method. This result takes about three to five hours. That's more than enough time for matches, perhaps even medal ones, to finish. It's expected that the IOC will come out with a final version in June.

UNDER FIRE

3.5 lakh people sign petition to cancel Oly

AFP @Tokyo

JAPAN expanded a coronavirus state of emergency on Friday, just 10 weeks before the Olympics, as campaigners submitted a petition with more than 350,000 signatures calling for the Games to be scrapped.

With Tokyo and other areas already under emergency orders until the end of May, three more regions — including northern Hokkaido, which will host the Olympic marathon — now join them.

"Today, we decided to add Hokkaido, Okayama and Hiroshima to the area under the state of emergency from May 16 to 31," Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said.

In these regions, "the population is relatively big and the number of new cases is very rapidly increasing", he said.

The widening emergency, aimed at combatting a fourth wave putting Japan's medical system under strain, comes with public opinion firmly opposed to holding the Games this summer, fearing further infections.

Kenji Utsunomiya, a former candidate for Tokyo governor, urged Games organisers to "prioritise life" as he submitted the 351,000-signature petition to city authorities.

"I think the Olympics this time is about whether we prioritise life or a ceremony and event called the Olympics," Utsunomiya said, urging Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike to push for cancellation.

Chess events raise $50k for Covid relief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

A SERIES of simultaneous online exhibition matches, featuring five-time world champ Viswanathan Anand, and other top Grandmasters from the country generated a good response. An initiative to raise money for Covid relief, the matches fetched around $50,000 (around ₹37 lakh). The event was held on *Chess.com* with some top Indian players taking part along with Anand. The proceeds will go to Red Cross India and the Checkmate Covid initiative of the All-India Chess Federation (AICF). On Thursday, Anand and GMs Koneru Humpy, Harika Dronavalli, Nihal Sarin, and R Praggnanandhaa played simultaneous games against a total of 105 players.

Any player with a Chess.com blitz or FIDE standard rating of under 2000 could play with former world champion Anand by donating $150 and with the other four GMs by paying $ 25 as registration fees.

The time control for the games was 30 minutes with a 30-second increment, with the GMs having 15 extra minutes. The GMs won with high scores but only Praggnanandhaa managed to win all of his games. "We are facing a kind of national struggle. It varies from state to state, but it's critical right now. I hope this will be a resource for the chess community. Some of us have had Covid and now, hopefully, they at least have someone to call and reach out," said Anand.

Premier League: Race for top four finish

Roberto Firmino scored a double as Liverpool pulled off a massive 4-2 victory over Manchester United at Old Trafford, thereby boosting their chances of making a top four finish. It looks like the fight for last two spots of the Champions League will go right down to the wire. Here's a look at the teams in the hunt...

Leicester | 3RD

Their next match could decide their fate. Sitting third at the moment, a win against Chelsea will confirm their return to Champions League. However, a defeat could mean Brendan Rodgers' men, who finished fifth last year, have to rely on rivals to slip. After Chelsea, they'll face another stiff test in the form of Spurs.

Remaining fixtures

Chelsea (A), Tottenham (H)

Chelsea | 4TH

Loss against Arsenal was a big wake up call. They can't afford to lose again against Leicester in their next match. A win would definitely put them in prime position to seal the top four spot. Chelsea, who can also qualify for the Champions League by winning the final later this month, will be determined to not leave it late.

Remaining fixtures

Leicester (H), Aston Villa (A)

West Ham | 6TH

The Hammers have punched above their weight to be part of this conversation. Though odds are against them, they are in with a chance if they get three wins and their rivals slip up. Also, they have winnable games on paper.

Remaining fixtures

Brighton (A), West Brom (A), Southampton (H)

LIVERPOOL | 5TH

A thrilling 4-2 win over United means Liverpool, with a game in hand, are just four points adrift of Chelsea, who occupy the fourth spot. Good news for the Reds supporters is that Liverpool have the momentum, having won five of their last seven fixtures. Moreover, their path ahead seems relatively easy on paper as compared to rival teams.

Remaining fixtures

West Brom (A), Burnley (A), Crystal Palace (H).

Spurs (7TH) & Everton (8TH)

They are in with a mathematical chance. They'll will be hoping that Chelsea lose both their ties and Liverpool and West Ham slip up big time.

EPL STANDINGS

Matches	P	W	D	L	GD	PTS
Man City	35	25	5	5	46	80
Man United	36	20	10	6	28	70
Leicester	36	20	6	10	21	66
Chelsea	36	18	10	8	22	64
Liverpool	35	17	9	9	20	60
West Ham	35	17	7	11	10	58
Spurs	35	16	8	11	20	56
Everton	35	16	8	11	4	56

WEEKEND FIXTURES: Saturday: Burnley vs Leeds (5 pm), Southampton vs Fulham (7.30 pm). **Sunday:** Brighton vs West Ham (12:20 am), Crystal Palace vs Aston Villa (4.30 pm), Tottenham vs Wolves (6.35 pm), West Brom vs Liverpool (9 pm), Everton vs Sheffield (11.30pm).

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS NETWORK

EXPRESS READ

Sathiyan donates ₹1 lakh for Covid relief

CHENNAI: Indian table tennis player G Sathiyan on Friday said that he was donating a sum of Rs one lakh to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund in its fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. "It is really heart wrenching to see what's happening around in our country...," he wrote on Twitter. The TT ace also urged everyone to help each other in whatever way possible.

Nadal beats Zverev to reach Italian Open last four

ROME: Nine-time champion Rafael Nadal dispatched his Madrid Masters slayer Alexander Zverev 6-3, 6-4 to reach the Italian Open semifinals on Friday. Second-seed Nadal lost to Zverev in the Madrid last-eight last week, but ended his three-match losing streak against the German in the Foro Italico. "It was an important victory for me against a great player," said the Spaniard. The German rallied in the second set but Nadal saved eight break points to seal victory.

Shubhankar lone Indian to make cut at British Open

WISHAW (UK): Shubhankar Sharma made up for a dismal first round with 1-under 71 in the second round to make the cut at the Betfred British Masters here. Sharma, who shot 73, added 71 to get to even par as the cut fell at even par for 36 holes. The other three Indians exited early. Robert MacIntyre finished with two birdies to fire a 66 and join Richard Bland and Calum Hill at the top.

Bengaluru FC's Ketkar in India under-19 set-up

BENGALURU: FC Bengaluru United's Shreyas Ketkar has been included in India's U-19 set up. The midfielder, who represented his club in the I-League second division from October to January, was also part of the Bengaluru United U-18 academy batch.

Rookie keeper-batter Indrani gets maiden India call-up

PTI @New Delhi

Rookie wicketkeeper-batter Indrani Roy from Jharkhand was rewarded with maiden Test and ODI call-up for India's tour of England next month but senior left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad missed out as she is recovering from COVID-19. The 29-year-old Gayakwad is also nursing an injury. The Neetu David led selection panel made a course correction with teen batting sensation Shafali Verma and seasoned pacer Shikha Pandey making it to all three squads after their South Africa home series snubs.

SQUADS: TEST & ODI: Mithali Raj (Captain), Smriti Mandhana, Harmanpreet Kaur (vice-captain), Punam Raut, Priya Punia, Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Sneh Rana, Taniya Bhatia (WK), Indrani Roy (WK), Jhulan Goswami, Shikha Pandey, Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Poonam Yadav, Ekta Bisht, Radha Yadav.

T20I: Harmanpreet Kaur (Captain) Smriti Mandhana (vice-captain), Deepti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Richa Ghosh, Harleen Deol, Sneh Rana, Taniya Bhatia (WK), Indrani Roy (WK), Shikha Pandey, Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Poonam Yadav, Ekta Bisht, Radha Yadav, Simaran Dil Bahadur.

Preparation issues affected season: Sabir Pasha

ASHOK VENUGOPAL @Chennai

THE 2020-21 Indian Super League (ISL) season was a forgettable campaign for Chennaiyin FC (CFC) as they finished eighth in the points table.

Syed Sabir Pasha, assistant coach of CFC, feels several factors contributed to his team's poor showing. According to him, the lack of proper preparation due to Covid-19 and the team's inability to seize the momentum were the main issues for the lacklustre season. He is optimistic that they will make amends in the coming season.

"We have always been a top contender for the top two places in the league. Obviously, we created a lot of goal-scoring chances and did not end up scoring. Initially, we also did not have the whole group of players to prepare. The foreign players in the team joined late because of their visa issues due to Covid. Thus, we did not prepare as well we would have liked," said Sabir.

Despite having a solid team, CFC could muster only three wins in the whole campaign.

"Except one game against Hyderabad, one cannot say that we did not match our opponents or that we did not compete. In most of the matches, we were the better side. But we did not score enough and that's why we had only three wins," Sabir assessed.

CFC were involved in as many as 11 draws, with some defensive errors at critical stages also resulting in them squandering opportunities to notch up wins. "Honestly, we could have won all the drawn matches. Luck was not on our side. In matches where we scored and felt we were winning at one stage, suddenly we conceded silly goals and lost," opined the former Indian Bank player.

With CFC making frequent changes to the coaching staff in recent times, there is a feeling among a certain section of supporters that the instability is unsettling the team.

"If you see all the ISL teams, we have perhaps made the least number of changes to the coaching staff over the years. So I do not think that was a factor," said Sabir.

LOOKING FORWARD

Need to adapt to new normal & move forward: NEUFC defender

MARTIN JOSEPH @Kochi

ASHUTOSH Mehta remains tight-lipped about his future, but the defender, who was part of the NorthEast United team which captured the imagination of the nation last season, is expected to be an ATK Mohun Bagan player by next month.

That is some good news amidst what has been a challenging few months for him. Like everyone in the footballing community, the 30-year-old was also left in shock when Bagan goalkeeper Arindam Bhattacharya's mother passed away just a few days back due to Covid-19. And Ashutosh knows that helpless feeling very well. "I spoke to Arindam after what happened. It is just a very sad news. I have experienced something similar like this myself. When the season (ISL-7) was going on, my mother was very very critical after getting Covid. I was supposed to leave the camp but thankfully, she got the help," he said while adding that she is stable at the moment.

Given the prevailing Covid situation in India, there are question marks about whether the next ISL season will also have to be held in a bio-secure bubble.

The last edition was successfully held in Goa between last November and March 13 but the former Mumbai City player said that being in a bubble can take a toll mentally. "It was very challenging to be honest, because it is the first time all the players were in a bio-bubble. It becomes very difficult and you don't get to do anything. You go for training, you come back to the room, you go to the gym and you come back to the room," he said when asked about going into another bubble.

However, the full-back admitted that it was important to adapt and deal with the situation. He is looking forward to a big season as he could be fighting for the title with Bagan and he also broke into the national team recently. His focus remains on trying to be fit and ready and face the challenges of being in a bio-bubble. "As a professional, you have to deal with the situation and you have to adapt to the new normal and it is not only for players, but this thing is happening around the world. You just need to adapt and move forward," he said.

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QUOTATION
Password protected e-mail quotations are invited for the supply of the following items

Sl. No	Quotation No.	Description	Last date of Online submission
1.	Q94/2021	Cryogenic Liquid Medical Oxygen Transport Vehicle of various capacity on rental basis.	18.05.2021 11.00 am.

Quotation documents and all other information related to quotation and bidding process can be downloaded from the website: www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in.
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CIN: L13100TG1958GOI001674
e-Tender Notification

Bid Notice No: NMDC-Kirandul/SP-III/2021/PKG-IV	Date of Notification : 15-05-2021
MSTC Ref No. : NMDC/HO/5/21-22/ET/21	

NMDC Limited, invites e-tenders on Turnkey Basis from experienced, reputed and competent Contractors / firms as per the details :
(a) Package Name : Dry Circuit System on Turnkey Basis (Package-IV) at Kirandul Complex, Dist. Dantewada, Chhattisgarh State. (b) Consultant : TATA CONSULTING ENGINEERS, KOLKATA. (c) Completion Time : Thirty-Three (33) months (including monsoon period). (d) EMD amount : Nil (Bid Security Declaration needs to be submitted).
Last date & time of Bid submission : On or before 3.00 P.M (IST) on 15-06-2021.
The tender document including pre-qualification requirement can be viewed and / or downloaded from NMDC's website https://www.nmdc.co.in ; CPP Portal : www.eprocure.gov.in ; MSTC website : https://mstcecommerce.com from 15-05-2021 to 14-06-2021.
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Mob: (+91) 91636 22244, Ph : (+91-33) 66115500, Fax : (+91-33) 66115501, Email : sbisai@tce.co.in

EXFILE • HISTORY

THE LADY WITH THE LAMP

"The two prime functionaries of the state are the nurse and the schoolmaster," wrote Victor Hugo in his monumental novel *Les Miserables*, unknowingly paying the rightful tribute to one of his more enlightened contemporaries, **Florence Nightingale**. A look at her illustrious life and career

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE	Born 1820	Died 1910	Known as: The lady with the lamp	Famous for: Founding modern nursing, service during Crimean War

1820 — Born into an aristocratic family and named after the Italian city of her birth, Florence

1836 — Experienced religious awakening and chose to do the God's work by becoming a nurse. Opposed by family as nursing was regarded disreputable, suitable only for lower-class women

1844 — Started nursing after training at Kaiserswerth Nursing School in Germany

1844-1853 — Served as superintendent of the Institution for the Care of Sick Gentlewomen in London. Cared for prostitutes during a cholera epidemic

THE ROAD TO SERVICE

1854, THE CRIMEAN WAR

Britain invaded Russian-held Crimean Peninsula, laying siege to Sevastopol, the headquarters of the Russian fleet

Florence was sent to Barrack Hospital at Scutari, outside Constantinople (Turkey)

With 38 nurses under her command, she set about caring for troops packed in squalid wards, many of them wracked by frostbite, gangrene

She rankled commanding officers for supplies, better conditions at barracks

Improved water supply and introduced insulated huts to protect wounded soldiers

Constantly travelled, tending to the wounded

Constantly travelled by carriage, on horseback and on foot with artillery fire echoing in the background, to inspect other hospitals in the hills. Nightingale sailed for England from Constantinople in 1856, four months after the signing of the Treaty of Paris that ended the Crimean War. Fell ill with a malady that the British troops called **Crimean Fever**, later identified as spondylitis

CELEBRATED IN BRITAIN, AND HOW

* Front-page engraving in the Illustrated London News showing Nightingale making her rounds with her lamp

STATISTICIAN

She gathered data from military hospitals in Constantinople that verified what she had suspected:

7 TIMES
as many British soldiers died of disease in the Crimean War than in combat

42%
Mortality rate at Scutari before she joined

2.2%
Mortality rate after her pioneering works

Her statistics drew a direct relationship between improved sanitation and plummeting death rates. She used modern statistics tools like graphs and pie charts to crunch the numbers

* Pioneer of **data visualisation** through infographics to help poorly-educated people get the message

* Her work at Scuttari was romanticised in The Mission of Mercy: Florence Nightingale receiving the wounded at Scutari, a large canvas painted by Jerry Barrett in 1857

DID YOU KNOW?

9,00,000
Combatants died in the war. The Crimean War was the first to see artillery and modern war correspondents in conflict zones

AFTER WAR

Criticised **the Poor Laws**, prodding Parliament to improve the shelters by establishing separate wards for the sick and the infirm. Introducing trained nurses and formed oversight boards. Originated the concept of soldiers injured in war being considered neutral; the ethic would become central to the International Committee of the **Red Cross**, founded in Geneva

1860-70s

Joined social reformer Harriet Martineau in an attempt to repeal **the Contagious Diseases Acts**, which authorised the arrest and compulsory inspection for venereal disease of prostitutes . Wrote the 1875 Public Health Act that increased average life expectancy from 40 years to 60 before antibiotics

SWACCHH BHARAT

She found that bad drainage, contaminated water, overcrowding and poor ventilation were behind the high death rate in British Army in India. She said the health of the army and the people of India had to go hand in hand and campaigned to improve the sanitary conditions of the country

UK mulls tough calls as Indian variant cases double in a week

B1.617.2-triggered cases jump twofolds in six days; officials advocate surge testing, expanded vax drive if the govt is to keep its June 21 date on lifting of all curbs

COVID-19

LONDON: The case numbers related to the B1.617.2 variant of Covid-19, first identified in India, have more than doubled within a week in the UK, resulting in further surge testing and enhanced vaccine measures to be deployed in parts of the country where the strain is beginning to spread rapidly.

Public Health England (PHE) said on Thursday that its latest analysis shows the number of cases of the highly transmissible variant first detected in Maharashtra has risen from 520 last week to 1,313 cases this week. Most cases are in the northwest of England, with some in London, and additional measures are being put in place to "rapidly break chains of transmission". UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the health authorities are monitoring the situation 'very carefully' and will not hesitate to take further action, indicating that the roadmap to lifting all lockdown measures from June 21 may have to be reassessed.

"This data demonstrates why our swift and decisive measures are in place. Everyone has a part to play in controlling this variant, from participating in surge testing, to following the rules, to getting the jab,' said Hancock, adding: "We are committed to working with local areas and deploying our world-leading genomic sequencing to get this variant under control. We are supporting areas where the cases are rising."

The minister said it is imperative that people who live in one of the 15 areas currently covered by surge testing processes get a free PCR test and everyone who's eligible needs to come forward and get their vaccine. PHE said that while there is no 'firm evidence' yet to show this variant has any greater impact on the severity of disease or that it evades vaccines, the "speed of growth is concerning".

VARIANT TRAIL

The Indian variant, called B.1.617, was recently reclassified as variant of concern by the WHO. A look at the nitty-gritty of the variant

THREE Versions of the Indian variant -- B.1.617.1, B.1.617.2 and B.1.617.3

VERSION B.1.617.2 found to be of most concern because of its increased transmissibility

1ST Identified in Maharashtra in Oct last, (B.1.617.3). Two versions were detected in Dec

EFFECT IN INDIA

32% Of total patients below the age of 30

25.5% Of total patients in 29-29 bracket

WHY'S UK WORRIED: British scientists at Public Health England redesignated B.1.617.2 as "variant of concern" as it spreads more quickly than the original version

Numbers have more than doubled in a week, from **520 to 1,313**

Center for Disease Control classifies SARS-CoV-2 variants as:

- Variant of Interest (VOI)
- Variant of Concern (VOC)
- Variant of High Consequence (VOHC)

UK Vaccines Minister Nadhim Zahawi said the authorities are looking at how to best utilise the vaccine roll-out to protect the most vulnerable in the context of the current epidemiology, including the possibility of bringing forward the second doses for the most vulnerable in some of the most affected areas.

Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Manchester, one of the hotspots of the variant, has also called for a speeding up in the age eligibility criteria for vaccines in the affected areas. The National Health Service (NHS) is now offering a jab to all over the age of 38.

"Cases of this variant are rising in the community and we are continuously monitoring its spread and severity to ensure we take rapid public health action," said Dr Susan Hopkins, Covid-19 Strategic Response Director at PHE.

"Testing and isolating when required not only limits spread, it helps us to better understand how the variant behaves in the community which is vital to taking effective and proportionate action moving forward. The way to limit the spread of all variants is the same. Keep your distance, wash hands regularly and use mask," she said.

Special mirror to aid dark matter search

DISASTER

WASHINGTON: Dark matter, which is said to make up 85% of the universe, has eluded scientists for over 50 years, a new study may have solved why.

A team of American researchers hypothesize that our galaxy is filled with tiny particles with mass, known as dark photons, and traditional particle physics experiments are unable to detect them. Essentially, dark matter may be too light for current technology to pick up. With this new hypothesis, the team proposes a coin-sized accelerometer made of silicon nitride and a super-thin mirror to bounce light between the two surfaces.

> *We know dark matter exists but have never observed it. The material is the gravitational 'glue' that holds galaxies together*
>
> A researcher

If the distance between the two materials changes, researchers would know from the reflected light that dark photons were present because the silicon nitride and beryllium have different material properties, thus revealing the existence of dark matter. The idea of dark matter, originally known as 'missing matter,' was formulated in 1933, following the discovery that the mass of all stars in the Coma cluster of the galaxies used about 1% of the mass needed to keep galaxies from escaping the cluster's gravitational pull. Decades later in the 1970s, American astronomers Vera Rubin and Kent Ford found anomalies in the orbits of stars.

This discovery sparked a theory among the scientific community that the anomalies were caused by masses of invisible 'dark matter'. University of Delaware's Swati Singh gives another explanation.

When adding up all things that emit light, the total only comes to about 15% of matter in the universe, which is why experts say dark matter makes up the other 85%.

The mysterious substance does not emit light, but researchers are sure it exists by its gravitational effect – and they know it is not typical matter such as gas, dust, stars, planets and us.

Melting Antarctic ice will raise heat

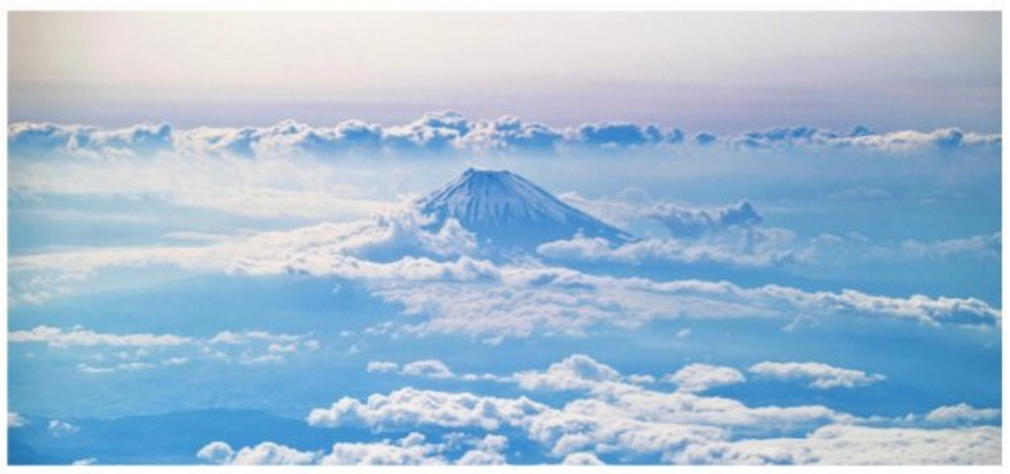
ENVIRONMENT

LONDON: The Antarctic ice sheet could suffer a chain reaction collapse as melting ice exposes land underneath, leaving less heat to be reflected away and causing temperatures to rise further and weather patterns to be changed, a study has warned.

Researchers used climate modeling and data for the Middle Miocene period, which was 13 to 17 million years ago, when carbon dioxide levels and global temperatures were similar to those expected at the end of the 21st century. They found that the Antarctic ice sheet was more unstable in its past than initially thought. If the ice sheet becomes unstable, it becomes harder for it to reform and could eventually collapse, especially if the climate continues to warm. The research, published in Nature Geoscience on Thursday, suggests that if global temperatures continue to rise, the ice sheet could give way to the land underneath it.

This would lead to higher temperatures and greater amounts of rain in the region, further accelerating the ice loss. "When an ice sheet melts, the newly exposed ground beneath is less reflective, and local temperatures become warmer," said study's lead author, University of Exeter prof Dr. Catherine Bradshaw.

In early January, NASA said that 2020 was the warmest on record, tied with 2016. The global average temperature was 1.02 degrees Celsius warmer than the mean between 1951 and 1980.



BEYOND CLOUDS

An aerial shot of Mount Fuji, Japan's highest mountain at 3,776 metres, from the window of a passenger aircraft en route to Kagoshima on Friday | AFP

Experts identify new 'talkative' dinosaur

HEALTH

MEXICO CITY: Paleontologists identified a new species of dinosaur after a specimen from about 73 million years ago was found in northern Mexico, the country's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) said on Thursday.

The scientists said the conditions in which the dino was found explain its preservation. "About 72 or 73 million years ago, a huge herbivore dinosaur died in what must have been a body of water full of sediment, so that its body was quickly covered by the earth and could be preserved through the ages," the institute said in a statement.

The animal is called Tlatolophus galorum. Its tail was discovered first, in the General Cepeda area of the northern state of Coahuila in 2013.

As excavations continued, scientists eventually discovered 80 percent of its skull, its 1.32-meter crest and bones such as its femur and shoulder, which allowed researchers to finally realize this year that they had a new species of dinosaur on their hands, the INAH said.

"We know that they had ears with the capacity of hearing low-frequency sounds, so they must have been peaceful but talkative dinosaurs," the statement said. Paleontologists also believe that the dinosaurs "emitted strong sounds to scare away predators or for reproductive purposes." The discovery is still under investigation, but research about the ancient reptile has already been published in the scientific journal Cretaceous Research, according to INAH.

"It is an exceptional case in Mexican paleontology," the INAH said. "Highly favorable events had to occur millions of years ago, when Coahuila was a tropical region, for it to be conserved in the conditions it was found in."

The name Tlatolophus is derived from the indigenous Nahuatl language word tlahtolli — which means word or statement — and the Greek word lophus, meaning crest.

The animals crest's shape looks like what the INAH said is "a symbol used by Mesoamerican people in ancient manuscripts to represent the action of communication and knowledge itself."

CONSERVATION

Hollywood celebrities rally behind Albanians to save the last of the wild rivers

ECOLOGY

ALBANIA: Cutting into craggy mountains, meandering through plains and eventually hitting Albania's shimmering Adriatic, the Vjosa river's untouched landscapes are a national treasure, but one that is under imminent threat.

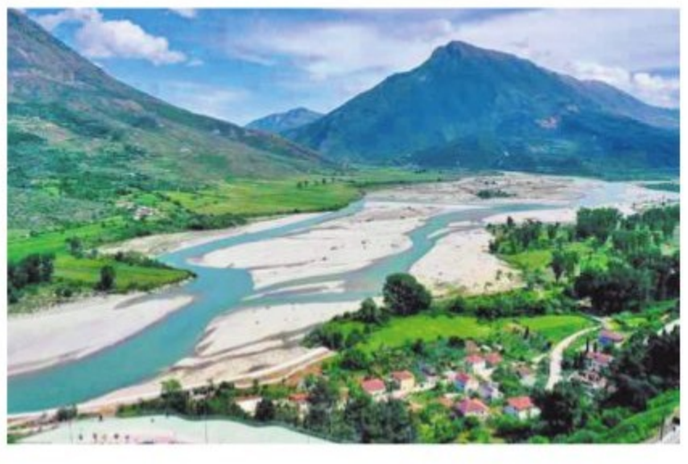
Activists feel that time is running out to save what they call Europe's last major wild river — one whose course is unaltered by industry, cities or dams — recruiting A-listers like Leonardo DiCaprio to their cause. The immediate concern is a plan to build a 50-metre (165-foot) high hydroelectric dam. A Turkish-Albanian firm has the rights to the project, which would be the first development to change the course of the roughly 200 km Albanian stretch of a river that rises in the Pindus mountains across the border in Greece. The dam would flood areas replete with rare animal and plant life, wiping out farmland and killing the livelihoods of fishermen.

"Vjosa is my greatest love. My life is here, my childhood is here, my youth is here," says local restaurateur Arjan Zeqaj.

If the reservoir comes, all that will be gone. The water will lap against the edge of the road just metres from his terrace. "I would have to emigrate," says Zeqaj. "I see no other way to survive here."

Legal rows over the dam have been hanging over the residents for two decades. And for years, activists have been pushing the same solution.

EcoAlbania NGO is working with international NGOs to raise awareness, with Ulrich Eichelmann of Austria-based RiverWatch describing it as the "only chance in Europe" to save such a river system. The activists point out that 1,175 animal and plant species have been recorded along the Vjosa, including 119 protected under Albanian law and 39 that are listed internationally as threatened.



And they also argue that Albania does not need any more hydroelectric power and should concentrate on other renewable energy sources. On the face of it, the Albanian government agrees. Officials say they are opposed to major development along the Vjosa and are developing projects involving solar power and liquid natural gas.

Last year, activists won a major victory when the environment ministry refused to allow Turkish-Albanian venture Ayen-ALB to start work on the proposed dam.

Yet the government is resisting the national park designation, opting instead for a less strict "protected area" categorisation. "A national park is a bit too much," Prime Minister Edi Rama told AFP, claiming that the designation would stop tens of thousands of people from going about their daily lives and stop activities from agriculture to ecotourism.

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SATURDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Mickey Mouse debuts

On this day in 1928, the Walt Disney cartoon character Mickey Mouse made his debut in a test screening of the silent animated short *Plane Crazy*

WHO IS MICKEY?

An anthropomorphic mouse who typically wears red shorts, large yellow shoes, and white gloves, Mickey is one of the world's most recognisable characters

THE PLOT

Inspired by Charles Lindbergh's heroic first solo flight across the Atlantic, *Plane Crazy*'s plot entailed Mickey and some animal friends attempting to assemble their own airplane

FAILURE TO SUCCESS

The cartoon failed to obtain distribution. Disney's second attempt, *The Gallopin' Gaucho*, was also a failure. He tasted success with *Steamboat Willie*

Shubha Punja on her experience in Bigg Boss

PG 4

WATCH LIST

SECRET OF WHALES (ENGLISH)
Streaming on Disney + Hotstar

Plunge into the epicentre of whale culture to experience the extraordinary communication skills and intricate social structures of five different species: orcas, humpbacks, belugas, narwhals and sperm whales. Secret of Whales was filmed across 24 locations over three years. The film takes into the world of whales to reveal how they live and love, and explores the cultures of each of the five species.

Cast: Sigourney Weaver

NOMADLAND (ENGLISH)
Streaming on Disney + Hotstar

Following the economic collapse of a town in rural Nevada after the Great Recession, Fern sets off on the road exploring a life outside of conventional society as a modern-day nomad. The film starring Frances McDormand, David Strathairn and Linda May won Best Picture, Best Actress (Frances McDormand) and Best Director for Chloe Zhao at the 93rd Academy Awards. The movie has been adapted from Jessica Bruder's book *Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century.*

Cast: Frances McDormand, David Strathairn, Linda May

SEXIFY (ENGLISH)
Streaming on Netflix

To build an innovative sex app and win a tech competition, a sexually inexperienced student and her friends must explore the daunting world of intimacy. The 2021 Polish television series stars Sandra Drzymalska, Aleksandra Skraba and Maria Sobocinska, and will give you some much-needed laughter.

Cast: Aleksandra Skraba, Maria Sobocinska, Sandra Drzymalska

THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW (ENGLISH)
Streaming on Netflix

An agoraphobic psychologist befriends a neighbour living across the street from her New York City brownstone condo, only to see her own life turned upside down when the woman disappears and she suspects foul play. This is the premise of The *Woman in the Window*, a recently-released American psychological thriller on Netflix, directed by Joe Wright and written by Tracy Letts. It is based on the 2018 novel of the same name by pseudonymous author A J Finn.

Cast: Amy Adams, Gary Oldman Anthony Mackie, Fred Hechinger, Wyatt Russell

TRYING TIMES

Image for representation only

With travel coming to a halt due to lockdown, the already-struggling hospitality industry is working out ways to stay afloat

MONIKA MONALISA

THE hospitality sector had a respite of around three-four months in between periods of high Covid caseloads - September-October last year and March-present. It is back to square one, under lockdown and reeling from losses.

JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru, which had around 85-90 per cent occupancy before the pandemic struck, now finds the situation almost reversed. "The hospitality sector has been one of the worst-hit ones this time. Occupancy is currently just 10 per cent. Guests are mostly people who are in transit, those who had to extend their stay due to the lockdown, or those wanting to isolate themselves for any travel reason," says Yash Bareria, head of sales.

ITC Hotels is also facing a similar situation, says Amaan Kidwai, general manager, ITC Gardenia. "Room occupancy has come down drastically. During this lockdown, hotels are also one of the categories that should be completely closed. But currently we have some guests who had to extend their stay due to lockdown," says Kidwai, adding that to create a safety bubble, 100 of their staff members are also staying in the hotel to reduce outside contact.

In order to keep themselves afloat, hotels are also offering takeaway food. Somnath Mukherjee, area director, Karnataka, for Taj Hotels, says they are focusing on re-connecting with guests. "We have recently introduced Innergise, a special menu featuring fresh and natural meals packed with antioxidants and immunity-boosting superfoods," says Mukherjee, adding that the menu is priced at ₹1500.

The package comprises all meals delivered to the room. Guests are also provided high speed internet to help them work or stay entertained in isolation

Sushma Khichar, manager,
Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park

Apart from that, Mukherjee says their Yeshwantpur branch is offering quarantine rooms for asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic Covid patients, in collaboration with Columbia Asia and People Tree Hospitals. "Taj Yeshwantpur provides all meals within prescribed protocols. Pre-packed meals are placed outside the room door in disposable containers. Used containers and cutlery is discarded by guests in the dedicated dustbins," says Mukherjee, adding that in case the patient turns critical they are shifted to a hospital facility that has full care.

Hotels are also offering isolation packages for people who tested negative but need to isolate for travel reasons or if they are primary contacts etc. Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park, is one such hotel. Its manager, Sushma Khichar, says, the guest needs to carry a negative RT-PCR report to avail of the facility. "The package comprises all meals delivered to the room. Guests are also provided high-speed internet to help them work or stay entertained in isolation," says Khichar.

The Den Bengaluru in Whitefield, which also offers similar packages, has set up a separate team for such services. Vinesh Gupta, general manager, says, "We have allotted around 7-8 per cent of our rooms to this service. These rooms have a separate air flow and a separate task team for this package, keeping the safety of other guests in mind."

Debolina Ray is a Bengaluru-based blogger, who runs a blog called She Knows Grub, dishes out fun food-related trivia in this weekly series. So, answer these three questions and find out how much of a foodie you are.

GRUB HUB

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Food quiz'**

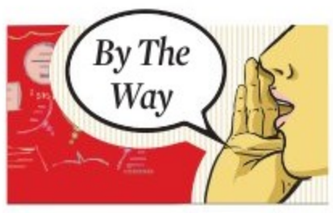
The correct answers and names of the first three respondents with right answers will be featured in CE on Monday. The first prize winner this week will also receive a complimentary voucher on delivery (worth ₹2,500) from Sriracha **

QUESTIONS

1. He is said to have introduced the coffee plant to India, by bringing seven raw beans from Yemen, on his way back from Hajj. He planted these beans in hills of Karnataka. Name this famous saint.
2. This is a dessert made throughout India and it is known by various names like milk cake, kalakand etc. It is made with khova (thickened milk) and sugar. In Karnataka, there is a city that's hugely popular for it. What is the city and the name of the sweet?
3. Actor and playwright Girish Karnad's old house is the location of this new Cambodian restaurant in Bengaluru. It is known for its Fish Amok. What is the name of the restaurant?

**Conditions apply

For more food-related stories and recipes, turn to page 3.



WEDDING BELLS

Chandan Kumar and Kavitha are one happy couple. The actors tied the knot on Friday and took to Instagram to share the good news. They captioned the post, "Not glorious but filled with happiness.." Here's wishing the duo lots of joy!

IN MEMORIAM

'KANAKA MURTHY WAS A PIONEER'

CHIRANJIV SINGH
Former ambassador to UNESCO

KANAKA Murthy's works are all over: in temples, ashrams and institutions. I once asked her why she never put signature on her works; her sculptures would stand for centuries and people would wonder who made them. But she said this was God's work. Her Guru also did not sign his works; she did not either. For her, this was a part of her spirituality; and she transcended ego through her works.

She was born on December 2, 1942 in T Narasipura (Mysuru district). She came to Bengaluru for higher studies and did B.Sc. Here, she joined Kalamandira, the first arts school in Bangalore, where she learned painting and drawing. But she was fascinated by sculpture. People dissuaded her from taking it up saying the field was not fit for a woman, but Kanaka Murthy broke the tradition and became a sculptor. She was a pioneer. Traditional Shilpis are a tightly knit community and for a Brahmin women to break into it was audacious.

Her Guru, D Vadiraja, himself was not from the community of Shilpis either. Her training and apprenticeship under him gave strength to her art and craft. Traditional Shilpis follow canons laid down in Shilpa Shastras because idols are worshipped in temples. But her Guru was a free thinker and so was she. She made sculpturs for temples, but did not follow rigid guidelines. Her work was traditional yet modern, a balance that is hard to achieve. She was free of constraints, creative, yet worked within the broad tradition. In this her model was the Chalukyan Shilpa which also did not follow rigid canons.

Kanaka Murthy grew up with music at home. Her parents were well-to-do land owners and they had musical soirees at home. She was deeply interested in Kannada literature and was very fond of Kuvempu. She had composed some of his verses in Carnatic classical music. It was her interest in music that led to her doing portraits of Gungubai Hangal, Doraiswamy Iyengar, T Chowdiah, Mallikarjuna Mansur and Bhimsen Joshi, besides those of eminent Kannada writers like Kuvempu, Shivarama Karanth, U R Anantha Murthy and G V. She was not only a traditional shilpi, but also a modern sculptor.

Her interest in literature led her to write four books, including her autobiography. Another book is ready for publication and will be brought out soon.

Our conversations often revolved around music and literature. She treated me like her younger brother. On Naga Panchami, she would come home with a gift. She broke with tradition in many ways, but in this she followed the tradition. Whenever she went to Gandhi Bazaar she would also being something for us from Subbamma stores. She was an expert cook and took pride in her Mulkanadu cuisine. She was a very warm and affectionate person and treated us like family.

Her devotion to her Guru was exemplary. Her books are about her Guru. She was a model of Guru Shishya Parampara, but she was very modern in her thinking. She was deeply spiritual but did not believe in ritualistic religion. She had desired that her body be donated to a medical college rather than be cremated. Sadly this was not to be because of her death from covid 19. She was an inspiration to many people. Her life is a lesson in how to be modern in thinking yet remain rooted in native culture.

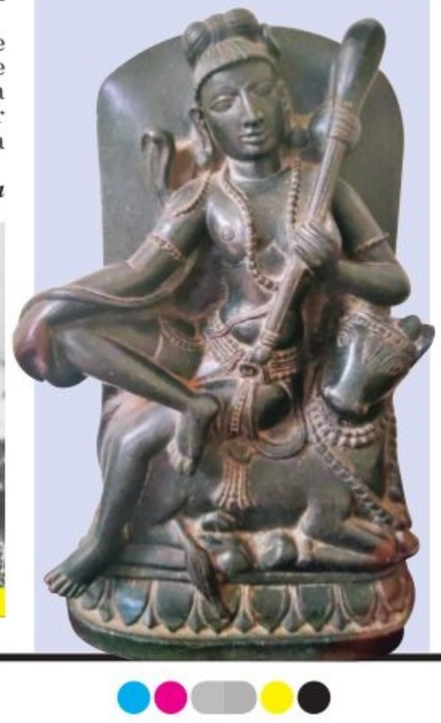
She was truly an unusual person. We will not see the like of her again. She broke taboos and didn't just become a pioneer but also an inspiration for many others. Karnataka has lost a great artiste.

– As told to Simran Ahuja

Kanaka Murthy with husband Narayana Murthy

Kanaka Murthy was a bold and dynamic woman. It is difficult to work with stone even for a male sculptor but she had a knack for techniques and handled the tools easily. When I wanted to learn the traditional art, I remember seeking her help. She had the skill to work with different types of stones, be it granite, sandstone, slate or shellstone, etc.

Ganesha L Bhat,
Bengaluru-based sculptor



I was shocked to hear the news, I didn't get a chance to say goodbye. I remember our first meeting. Many sculptors, including Kanaka Murthy madam, had come home to see my father's works. I was 16 and was excited to show her my wax mouldings. She placed her hand on my head, said we need more women in the field and encouraged me to continue. I consider that to be my blessing from her.

- Gayatri A Shilpi,
Bengaluru-based sculptor

WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE

INSTRUMENT SHOWCASE

Beat the lockdown boredom by discovering a new instrument. Join the free session on The Indian Music Experience's Facebook page for a conversation and demonstration of the Sumukha Veena with the creator himself - Sampagodu S Vighnaraja. This modified acoustic slide guitar is a new addition to Carnatic music.
Date: May 15, 6:30 pm
Details: Facebook page of The Indian Music Experience

SUMMER COLLECTION

Kalki Fashion's The Summer Handbook Collection includes clothes with embroidered tulle, crystal-beaded silhouettes, flowing silks and more. The prices start from Rs 2,340.
Details: Check Kalki Fashion's website

SCIENCE FEST

Check out this lecture on 'Science and Seeing: The Visual Technology of Contagion in 19th Century India', being organised as part of Contagion. This is an online exhibition by Science Gallery Bengaluru.
Where: Science Gallery Bengaluru's YouTube channel
When: May 15, 6.30pm

JAPANESE DECOR

Inspired by the ancient art of Japanese paper folding, the Origami collection by Kaleen India explores geometry and line —from realistic depictions of folded birds and flowers to abstract lined graphics.
Available at: kaleen-india.com

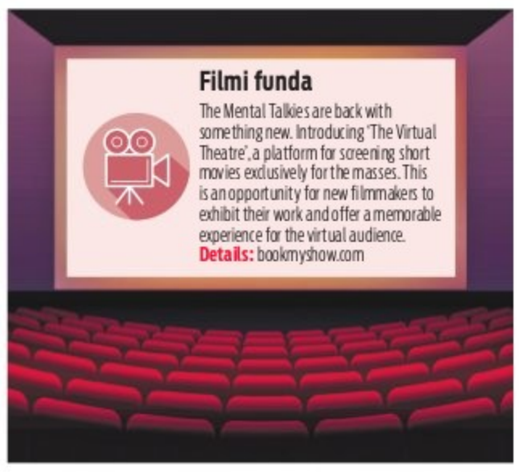
ABC PRODUCTION & CUSHION COMEDY IS PUTTING TOGETHER THIS FUNDRAISER SHOW FOR COVID RELIEF. WHEN & WHERE: MAY 17, 10 PM. DETAILS: BOOKMYSHOW

Makeup session

Learn some easy makeup tips and tricks at this workshop, which is being conducted by Archana Tharakan. For details, check Insider.in
When: May 15, 4pm

Mystery at hand

Watch Unusual Suspect, a story about a group of friends who has come together on a video call for their college reunion. The party takes a tragic turn when they're unwillingly expected to solve a murder of their friend. This is a murder mystery thriller where you have to race against time to make sure that you're not the next victim of the murderer.
When: May 15 **Details:** bookmyshow.com



Filmi funda

The Mental Talkies are back with something new. Introducing 'The Virtual Theatre', a platform for screening short movies exclusively for the masses. This is an opportunity for new filmmakers to exhibit their work and offer a memorable experience for the virtual audience.
Details: bookmyshow.com

Write mode

Learn the art of writing by taking this course by Ruskin Bond. With over 70 years of experience, Bond needs no introduction. His class will provide you with the right guidance to become a good writer.
When: Till May 30
Details: bookmyshow.com

Running effect

Reebok introduces the spring summer variant of the Liquifect 180, a high-performance running shoe that has great cushioning, long-lasting comfort and lock in support from heel to toe. It comes in different colours and is priced at Rs 6,599. **Available at** shop4reebok.com, FlipKart and Amazon

QUICK FIX

What's cooking

IN YOUR KITCHEN?
We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at cityexpresschn@gmail.com.

LENTIL & CAULIFLOWER PULAO

INGREDIENTS

- **Canola oil:** 2 tsp ■ **Onion:** 1
- **Cauliflower:** 1/2, cut into florets
- **Basmati rice:** 1 1/4 cups
- **Mild Indian curry paste:** 2 tbs
- **Vegetable stock:** 3 cups
- **Bay leaves:** 2
- **Cinnamon quill:** 1
- **Lentils:** 400 g, drained, rinsed
- **Coriander leaves:** 2 tbsp, finely-chopped

METHOD

- Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add onion and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the cauliflower and rice and cook. Stir for about two minutes.
- Add curry paste and cook for another minute. Add stock, bay leaves and cinnamon, then bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat to low, cover and cook for 15 minutes until rice is cooked and all liquid has been absorbed.
- Fluff rice with a fork, stir in lentils and heat through for one minute. Sprinkle over coriander, if desired.

— Sukriti Rao, Alakanada

FIT BIT

KROUNCHASANA

(HERON POSE)

In Sanskrit, 'Krouncha' means heron, and 'asana' means pose. It is a unique derivation of a forward bend that requires the leg to be brought toward the face. It stimulates the Manipura (solar plexus) chakra. Energizing this chakra imparts power, confidence, and self-esteem. It is also associated with perceptions about freedom and the true self. Practicing this asana daily brings flexibility in the back. It aids in good blood circulation to the hips and hamstrings. The posture of Heron pose is similar to that of Paschimottasana but different. The thigh muscles are stretched in this asana, so caution should be exercised while doing this asana.

STEPS

- Sit in Dandasana (staff pose).
- Move your left leg backward and press it under the hips.
- Maintain your balance so that the weight of the body is uniform on your sitting bones.
- In this position, the right foot is totally flat on the ground.
- Take a few breaths. Bend forward slightly and hold the soles of the right foot with your hands.
- Lift the leg up as much as possible without any pressure. Take care not to bend the back and head. Your neck and back should be straight.
- Try to bring the right leg towards the head.
- Slowly take deep breaths and stay in this position for 30 seconds.
- Slowly bring the right leg down.
- One cycle of this asana is complete. Practise this asana with the other leg too.

BENEFITS

- Flatulence and gas can be cured.
- Since you sit on your knees, the knee muscles are squeezed, eliminating pain and strengthening them.
- A good asana for enlarging the hips.
- Provides a good stretch to the spine and shoulders.
- Increases spinal flexibility and gives relief in back pain.
- Strengthens neck, shoulder and back muscles and is also good for your abs.

LIMITATIONS

- Don't try to use excessive force while initially doing this asana. Attempt the full pose gradually.
- If you get a cramp, release immediately.
- Women should avoid this during periods and pregnancy.
- Recommended to practise this in the morning. Or leave a gap of 4-6 hours between food and practice.

— by N Elumalai, PhD scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

SOUND BOARD

VEDANTA TALKS

These are talks given by Swami Sarvapriyananda at the Vedanta Society of New York (founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1894). Based on the Vedas, the sacred scriptures of India, Vedanta affirms the oneness of existence, the divinity of the soul, and the harmony of religions.
- On Apple Podcast

BELLWETHERS PODCAST

Bellwethers Podcast aims to enlighten minds with featuring some leaders, entrepreneurs and influencers from all around the world and share stories of how they achieved what everyone else thought was impossible.
- On Spotify

THEN WHAT ELSE?

Comedians Chitan and Sarvesh invite other artists to talk about anything and everything under the sun, until of course, one of them runs out of things to say and responds with the inevitable "Alright... then what else?"
- On Apple Podcasts

THE PEOPLE'S PHARMACY

Pharmacologist Joe Graedon and medical anthropologist Terry Graedon talk to leading experts to discuss their research on issues relating to drugs, herbs, home remedies, vitamins and related health topics.
- On Apple Podcast

CURIOSITY DAILY

Discovery's Cody Gough and Ashley Hamer will help you learn about your mind and body, outer space and the depths of the sea, and how history shaped the world into what it is today.
- On Google Podcast

POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

FIRST RANK RAJU

Raju, a bookish young man, fails a job interview owing to his lack of practical knowledge and contemplates suicide. So his parents decide to make him more pragmatic and ready to face the real world.
- Cast: Gurunandan, Apoorva Gowda

DIA

Dia takes three years to confess her feelings to Rohith but after a terrible accident, she is told he does not survive. Later, when she starts seeing Adi, she finds out that Rohith is still alive.
- Cast: Kushi, Pruthvi Ambaar

RANNA

Sharat assures his ageing grandfather that he will reunite him with his estranged daughter. To fulfil his promise, he goes to work for the woman's family as a driver.
- Cast: Sudeep, Rachita Ram

RAJA RANI

Rani, an impoverished woman, meets Raja, a wealthy actor, and pretends to be rich. However, Babu, who lusts after her and knows her truth, tries to wreck their relationship.
- Cast: Sivaji Ganesan, Padmini, SS Rajendran, TA Madhuram

Scan this QR code to find out how your favourite celebs are coping with the lockdown.

WHAT'S ON TED TALKS

1 3 STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVELY TALKING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE BY JOHN MARSHALL

In this actionable talk, communications strategist John Marshall explains why we need to rethink how we talk about climate change — and offers small but mighty language adjustments to get people to more intuitively understand and care about this existential threat.

2 HOW YOUR MEMORY WORKS—AND WHY FORGETTING IS TOTALLY OK BY LISA GENOVA

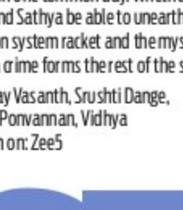
Have you ever misplaced something you were just holding? Completely blanked on a famous actor's name? Walked into a room and immediately forgot why? Neuroscientist Lisa Genova digs into two types of memory failures we regularly experience and reassures us that forgetting is totally normal.

3 THE SURPRISING SECRETS OF HUMMINGBIRD FLIGHT BY KRISTIINA J. HURME AND ALEJANDRO RICO-GUEVARA

In just a matter of seconds, hummingbirds can perform astonishing aerial acrobatics, eat lunch in midair, pollinate a flower, even escape threats while upside-down. How do they do it?

4 THE WORLD'S MOST PAINFUL INSECT STING BY JUSTIN SCHMIDT

One of these three creatures is thought to possess the world's most painful insect sting: there's an ant that forages in rainforest canopies, a bee that protects a hive of delectable honey, and a wasp that paralyzes tarantulas. So which has the nastiest sting? Justin Schmidt describes and ranks the pain inflicted by each insect.



5 I AM NOT YOUR ASIAN STEREOTYPE BY CANWEN XU

Growing up in the US in predominantly white communities, Canwen Xu struggled to reconcile her American and Chinese identities. She explains the unique ways that racial bias affects Asian Americans and shares how she has learned to embrace all of the different parts of her background.

NOW STREAMING

REGIONAL

YUVARATHNAA (Kannada)

A reputed college that is now on the verge of closing due to the privatisation of the education system and political reasons. The college principal fights against privatisation and the protagonist supports his vision.

Cast: Puneeth Rajkumar, Sayyeshaa Saigal, Sonu Gowda
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

PANCHAYAT (Hindi)

Panchayat is a comedy-drama, which captures the journey of an engineering graduate Abhishek, who for lack of a better job option joins as secretary of a panchayat office in a remote village of Uttar Pradesh.

Cast: Jitendra Kumar, Raghuvir Yadav, Chandan Roy
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

SARABHAI VS SARABHAI (Hindi, series)

The show revolves around the lives of the members of an uber wealthy, high society Gujarati family of Cuffe Parade in south Bombay, whose daughter-in-law is from a middle-class Delhi family.

Cast: Satish Shah, Ratna Pathak Shah, Sumeet Raghvan, Rupali Ganguly, Rajesh Kumar
- Watch on: Disney+Hotstar

JOJI (Malayalam)

Driven by greed and blind ambition, Joji decides to execute his plans of becoming wealthy following an unexpected event in the family. Will he succeed?

Cast: Fahadh Faasil, Baburaj, Shammi Thilakan
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

IRUMBU THIRAI (Tamil)

Kathiravan borrows a loan from a bank by producing fake documents. His happiness does not last long as the entire money from his account gets siphoned off. When Kathiravan begins the investigation, he gets to know about the mastermind cyber hacker behind this crime. Will Kathiravan catch the White Devil and get his money back?

Cast: Vishal, Suman, Arjun Sarja, Samantha Akkineni, Delhi Ganesh
- Watch on: Zee5

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

NAYATTU (Malayalam)

Three police officers become pawns for unscrupulous lawmakers when they are framed in an incident amid political elections and must flee to evade arrest.

Cast: Kunchacko Boban, Joju George, Nimisha Sajayan, Jaffer Idukki
- Watch on: Netflix

ACHAMINDRI (Tamil)

The story revolves around four people—Sathya, Malar, Shruti, Sakthi. While Sakthi is a pickpocket and loves Malar, Sathya is a cop who's in love with Shruti. Situations however change for Sakthi, Malar and Sathya when they land themselves in trouble on one common day. Whether Sakthi and Sathya be able to unearth the education system racket and the mystery behind a crime forms the rest of the story.

Cast: Vijay Vasanth, Srushti Dange, Saranya Ponvannan, Vidhya
- Watch on: Zee5

FOREIGN

THE INNOCENT (Spanish)

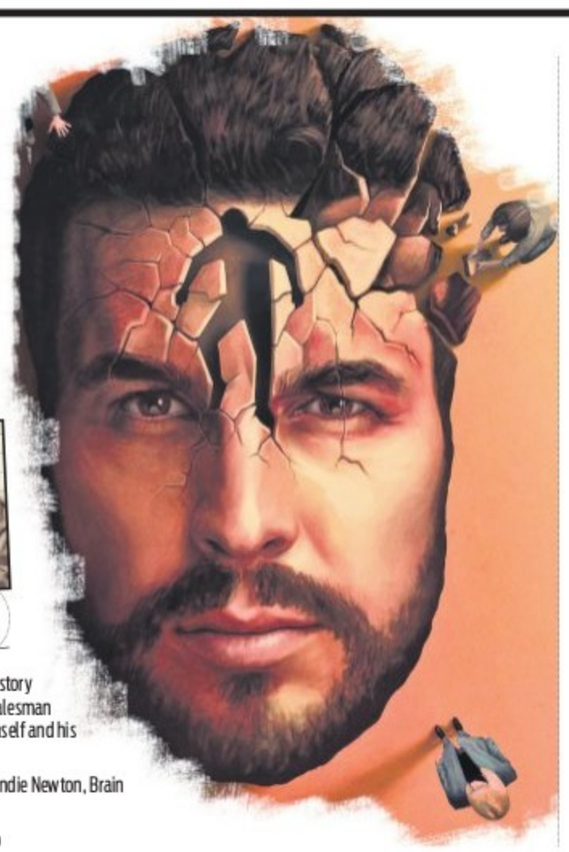
An accidental killing leads a man down a dark hole of intrigue and murder. Just as he finds love and freedom, one phone call brings back the nightmare.

Cast: Mario Casas, Alexandra Jiménez, Aura Garrido, José Coronado, Juana Acosta, Susi Sánchez,
- Watch on: Netflix

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS (English)

A moving tale inspired by the true story of Chris Gardner, a San Francisco salesman struggling to build a future for himself and his 5-year-old son Christopher.

Cast: Will Smith, Jaden Smith, Thandie Newton, Brain Howe
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video



MINARI (Korean, English)

Minari follows a Korean-American family that moves to a tiny Arkansas farm in search of their own American Dream. Named after a peppery Korean herb, Minari is a tender, wholesome, evocative ode to how one generation of a family risks everything to plant the dreams of the next. The film unspools with all the vividness of a lived memory.

Cast: Alan S. Kim, Yeri Han, Noel Cho
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

SHADOW AND BONE (English)

Dark forces conspire against orphan mapmaker Alina Starkov when she unleashes an extraordinary power that could change the fate of her war-torn world.

Cast: Jessie Mei Li, Archie Renaux, Ben Barnes, Freddy Carter, Amita Suman, Kit Young
- Watch on: Netflix

SUBSCRIPTION

Prime Video: ₹ 129 per month
Zee 5: ₹ 99 per month
Netflix: ₹ 199 per month

RUBINATIONS
RUBI CHAKRAVARTI
Writer, actor and funny girl

MOTHERS, THE WORLD NEEDS US!

Afshan, Iffath and Sahar

Dr. Sushila with Sapna and Seema

Monika and Ojas

Barely a week ago everyone was biting on bits and spewing great balls of fire. Except for our young 'un brigade who would periodically and provocatively question our erstwhile leaders (viva Instagram!), the rest of the middle-agers sat on their derrieres and played armchair pacifists. They will intellectually hold-forth, but not move from their comfort zones to do anything. Always... it's a plaintive cry of 'we are out-numbered, or the 'goose stepping brigade' will arrest us and so on and so forth. Instead, they will argue, poke holes in your efforts and do ineffectual sloganeering in private cliques and in the safety of their homes. Sigh! We (the middle-age brigade) need to stop subscribing to a narrow vision and grow another pair of courage and conviction of course!

This week was filled with taking a leaf out of the books of people who work and give selflessly without wasting time on our pot-bellied and shameless 'men in white,' who continue to twist and manipulate 'the narrative.' Vote bank politics is still an effective tool even though we have lost count of the dead and dying. Will someone tell these opportunists that nobody cares, now more than ever, and the blood in everyone's veins is the same! Ask us... we have been arranging for blood and oxygen worldwide and believe me, it's the same. Those who 'divide et-impera' will always use outlandish justifications usually associated with religious beliefs, skin-colour etc. But, at the end of the day, it always stems down to personal prejudices and bigotry which these mucilaginous 'kakistocracy' (governance by the worst people) use to their advantage. Beware of the 'lockdown-lowdowns'!

Amidst all this hullaballoo 'Mother's Day' crept in and out. I had completely forgotten, and I was pleasantly surprised as flowers and sinfully decadent gooey chocolate cakes started arriving from my daughter in Mumbai and my son who managed to re-enter the city from Goa where he was stuck for over a month! The notes they wrote me, had me prickly eyed. Somehow as we go through life picking up after them, empowering them, teaching them and sharing their highs and lows. You don't know when, and against all odds (and the natural law of survival), these humans become more important than even yourself.

I remember as my husband nearly passed out when we were suffering through Covid-19, I couldn't help him up. My son reached down and I instinctively stopped him because he was not infected. When does this change happen, when one puts the children above everything and everyone? I have been their mentor, laugh buddy and general dogsbody throughout the last two trying years and assured them that come what may... 'main hoon na' (you can count on me).

Speaking to a host of mothers, I realized that we were 'moms' first, lockdown or not, and the onus of home-schooling, keeping the younger ones engaged, cooking, cleaning and dealing with the older kids fears and frustrations while keeping our careers on a backburner, was mentally and physically exhausting. Food consultant and writer Monika shared that she felt the most depressed being in isolation was when she couldn't hold, comfort and interact with her young son. Notwithstanding her own racking illness it was her son who occupied her thoughts. Ace doctor Sushila Suresh can impress you with her steely resolve and fantastic acumen. But, her thoughts and long distance advice was on hand 24/7 for her two daughters, one whom is a doctor herself.

My friend Afshan has my life-long admiration for bringing up her three daughters impeccably. A single mother who tragically lost her spouse early, her daughters are located all over the world as contributing adults. The youngest Sahar runs, Bare Necessities, a zero-waste solutions company and is an author to boot! Afshan has before and after the lockdown played the role of a mother/parent to perfection.

Mama Mia is right!

A toast to sweet dreams

Aman Dua

Bartending and cocktails might be relatively new to India, but bartenders have been around forever in the West, and they have been concocting the most fascinating cocktails in that time. Naturally, some of these cocktails have found their niche and become legends in their own right. Cocktails are generally segregated into three genres to reflect the different times of the day. So, one has the eye openers (mostly breakfast cocktails), the day drinks (consumed in the afternoon), and last but not the least, the most fascinating - the night cap. This name was first mentioned in a college book in Europe. Most cocktail specialists also mentioned these cocktails as dessert cocktails, which were consumed post dinner.

In different countries the trends are very different. Some countries consider brandy or cognac or an aged brown spirit as night caps or drinks post dinner. These drinks were mostly on the heavy (body) and sweet side, like Brandy Alexander, Milk Punch or in-house Irish Cream. These cocktails can be served either hot or cold. The idea behind these cocktails was to create a rich and creamy sweet taste for the consumer so they can try this slowly after finishing their dinner and go to bed. As these cocktails contained a decent amount of alcohol, one also slept well.

Bartending has over a period of time evolved with the help of new techniques. As a result, every bartender has good knowledge of ingredients and their benefits, which makes night caps interesting. They use particulars herbs and spices in the these drinks to help the digestive system. I have created some cocktails on this pattern using mostly Indian and local ingredients.

Rage is made using curry leaves infused whiskey with in-house chocolate liqueur spice bitter. Its taste notes are robust sweet and spicy. Truth and Dare, on the other hand, is a vodka cocktail with crafted pistachio liqueur finished with distilled basil water. If you do try a night cap, just ensure to have the drink an hour before you hit the sack.

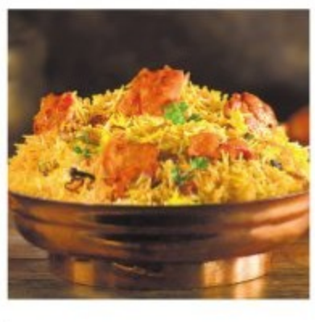
(The author is the beverage programmer at Raahi Neo Kitchen and Bar)

Night cap cocktail made with whiskey

NUGGETS

Hotel launches Covid care dabba

Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall has launched a care dabba, a Covid-19 care meal subscription plan. The initiative aims on providing healthy balanced meals to quarantined individuals at a subsidised price. Currently delivery is free within a five-kilometre radius of the hotel. The box includes mixed veg/ chicken curry, veg dry + dal + boiled egg + steamed rice + three tawa phulkas + plain curd + dessert.



New cloud kitchen in town

ITC Hotels expands its food delivery network with its second cloud kitchen in Bengaluru, and catering will be handled by the kitchens of ITC Windsor. Their biryani and pulao collection will be available to order for the residents of Whitefield through the food aggregator app Swiggy.

SCOOP OF JOY

Stay cool, stay safe. This summer, make your own ice cream at home with these simple, no equipment recipes

CHUNKY MONKEY ICE CREAM

INGREDIENTS

- Fresh coconut milk - 3 cups
- Almond milk - 1 cup
- Ripe bananas - 4-5 bananas, frozen
- Vanilla extract - 1 tsp
- Raw sugar/ preferred sweetener - 6-8 tbsp
- Almond butter - 2 tbsp
- Almond chips - ¼ cup
- Chocolate chips - 1/8 cup
- Chocolate chunks - 1/8 cup
- Salt - tiny pinch

METHOD

- Pour the fresh coconut milk and almond milk into a blender jar.
- Melt sugar and into liquid syrup and let it cool down.
- Add the frozen bananas into the blender and blend it.
- Add the vanilla extract and the almond butter into the mixture and blend it again.
- Pour the liquid sugar syrup when at room temperature and blend it once more.
- Pour the ice cream mixture into an air tight container and store it in the freezer for two hours.
- Now remove the ice cream and garnish it with almond chips, choco-chips and chocolate chunks.
- Put the ice cream back into the freezer for a minimum of six hours.

- Deeksha K, co-founder, Dittoo IceCreams

ALPHONSO MANGO ICE CREAM

INGREDIENTS

- Condensed milk - 350 gm or 1.5 cups
- Whole milk (full fat) - 200 gm
- Fresh cream - 100 gm or 1/2 cup
- Ripe Alphonso mango - 300 gm or 2-3 mangoes
- Cornflour - 15 gm or 2 tbsp
- Ice cubes - 2 trays

METHOD

- Prep work: Empty all the ice cubes into a wide bowl and keep ready. Peel and chop the flesh of the mangoes, puree into to a smooth paste using a blender and keep ready. Dissolve cornflour in two tablespoons of milk and set aside.
- In a heat-safe bowl, combine condensed milk, whole milk and fresh cream, mix well and heat, stirring all the while till the mix begins to boil
- Add the cornflour-milk mixture to the above hot mix, keep stirring continuously. Stir for another 1-2 minutes, till you notice that the hot mix has begun to thicken.
- Turn off the flame and place the entire bowl, on top of the ice cubes, to cool quickly.
- Once the mix has cooled to room temperature, blend in the mango puree into the ice cream mix
- Freezing the ice cream: Pour the mango ice cream mix into a storage box with a wide mouth. Freeze for two hours. Then scrape out the semi-frozen mix into a blender and blend thoroughly. Pour the mix back into the same box and freeze.
- Repeat the above two steps three more times - after the last time, let the ice cream freeze overnight, so that it firms up well.
- You can serve ice cream with a garnish of fresh mango pieces!

- Aarti Laxman Rastogi, Founder of Artinci

EASY COOKIES AND CREAM ICE CREAM

INGREDIENTS

- Whipping cream - 480 gm
- Condensed milk - 400 gm
- Vanilla extract - 1 tsp
- Oreo - 15 to 20 biscuits

METHOD

- Whip the cream using a hand or stand mixer until it forms stiff peaks.
- Fold in the condensed milk and vanilla extract and mix gently so the cream stays inflated.
- Add 3/4th of the crushed Oreo to the mix. Again, mix it in gently.
- Transfer the mix into a storage container and sprinkle the remaining Oreo on top.
- Store it in the refrigerator for at least eight hours before serving.

- Ajay Joe and Unni George, (@ulo.icecream on Instagram)

'IT WAS A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE'

...says Bigg Boss Kannada Season 8 contestant Shubha Poonja, who now sees her everyday life and career through a different perspective

A SHARADHAA

FOR Shubha Poonja, her stint in reality show *Bigg Boss Kannada Season 8* has been a life-changing experience, says the actor, who now wants to be careful with the kind of films she chooses. "*Bigg Boss* has given me love from family, which I got to know once I was out of the house. My fan base has tripled and I have gained a lot of women fans. This is something new for me. From now on whatever I choose, I will make sure that it will draw viewers," says Shubha, adding, "People liked me in *Moggina Manasu*, however, they did not show the same interest in my other films. I feel that as an actor, the audience likes you in the characters you play. But after watching me on the reality show, they look at personality and connect with you for being real," she says.

The actor is waiting for the release of *Tridevi*, which is a heroine-centric film, following which she has a thriller, *Rhymes*, ready for release. "The only other project I have signed and yet to begin shoot is *Ambuja*. This is a horror thriller, which I'm waiting for to take off. Whatever comes next, I will make sure I prioritise content which will attract a family audience," she says.

When she was offered a spot in the reality show, Shubha had a lot of apprehensions. However, it was her fiance, Sumanth Bilava, who suggested she participate. "He told me that I should not hesitate to experiment with something new. He felt it was an opportunity for me to show the people of Karnataka the real me. Looking back, it was the best platform for people to get to know me. It was an amazing experience, and it has changed my perspective on life. Today, I value the people around me and people in general. I am so grateful for everything I have, including a packet of biscuits," she admits.

> **Today, I value the people around me and people in general. I am so grateful for everything I have, including a packet of biscuits**
>
> — Shubha Poonja, actor

For Shubha, the *Bigg Boss* house was a ride of emotions. However, Season 8 was different with the contestants locked in the house at a time when most others in the outside world too were under lockdown. The actor, who missed Sudeep on the show, was heartbroken when the show got suspended. "We were not aware of the gravity of the situation. All of us were very sad to learn that people are losing near and dear ones. I heard stories of those who couldn't save lives. I felt it was not about money anymore. Technicians working for the reality show had to put their life at risk. Considering the grave situation, we felt it was better to come out," says Shubha, adding that it was a pity that they couldn't interact much with Sudeep. "He treated us like kids and explained the the do's and don'ts. He brought smiles to our faces. We didn't have anyone to correct us during the last three weeks when he could not host the show, after which things came to a standstill," says Shubha, who is otherwise calm and happy, and is learn to enjoy life without a phone. phone.

Friends: The Reunion teaser to premiere on May 27

CE FEATURES

HBO Max has released the teaser of the much-awaited *Friends: The Reunion*. The 40-second teaser, titled The One Where They Get Back Together, gives us a glimpse of what to expect from the special.

The teaser shows lead actors Jennifer Aniston (who plays Rachel Green), Courteney Cox (Monica Geller), David Schwimmer (Ross Geller), Lisa Kudrow (Pheobe Buffay), Matt LeBlanc (Joey Tribbiani) and Matthew Perry (Chandler Bong) walk away from the camera, in what looks like the street outside the famous Stage 24 at Warner Bros Studios where the series wrapped its 10-season run in 2004.

HBO Max has also announced, through the teaser, that the special will premiere on May 27.

A WITLESS STAR VEHICLE

SHILAJIT MITRA

THERE'S no impetus whatsoever to visit a theatre right now. Most of us already know this, which is why a Zee Plex viewing of Salman Khan's latest seems like the only choice. Yet, ten minutes into *Radhe*, you begin to regret the move. Everything looks too small and miniaturised. The sickly colour scheme floods the laptop screen. Bhai's entry shot, minus the hoots, is a glass-shattering mess.

Radhe, directed by Prabhudheva, is a remake of the 2017 South Korean drama *The Outlaws*. It was also rumoured that the film is a sequel to *Wanted* (2009), also directed by Prabhudheva, which Salman has denied. Still, ardent fans can draw the line. Once again, he's a cop named Radhe in the underbelly of Mumbai. Once again, his higher-up is played by Govind Namdev. Unlike Prakash Raj's gangster in the first film, the enemy here is Rana (Randeep Hooda), a drug dealer ruining the city.

Any Prabhudheva movie is a challenge to rote plot summaries; even then, *Radhe* takes the cake. There's no logic between, under, over or in the middle of scenes. The film is largely built around Rana's mission to narcotize the youth, and Radhe's efforts to stop him. In between, he slips away to romance a girl named Diya (Disha Patani), whose elder brother, played by Jackie Shroff, is his reporting officer. Salman, 55, doesn't act in his films anymore. He visits them. He breezes into big action sequences and struts right out, leaving behind a heap of bodies. He beats up goons in a high-rise, at a 90s-style dance club, and inside a toilet. The villains get generic names like Dalroo Dada and Mansoor from Malaysia. There's an infusion of Korean-style ultraviolence in some parts, but the action is mostly Bhai-efied. Randeep — in a man bun, black shades and jacket — proves no match. I cracked up when Rana, before a dust-up with Radhe, does a quick double take to the side, as though wondering if he's even got a chance. "I love it," he keeps saying in the film. He means his paycheck. Jackie Shroff, too, will do anything for an honest day's pay, even if that means swapping clothes with Disha in a song. "I'm too dangerous," he warns Radhe when they first meet, wagging two fingers. No Salman performance is complete without the hat-tips, which duly arrive. Diya drops off Radhe outside Galaxy apartments; elsewhere, he gives chase on a Being Human electric bike. All this is harmless fun — then again, you miss watching it with a crowd. The drug angle isn't worth dwelling upon, except to say it makes Rocky Handsome look like The Wire. Radhe inevitably compares his cleanup drive to 'Swachh Bharat', and enlists young kids in an anti-drug campaign. We know that one of these boys, who appears earlier in the film, will meet a rough fate. Salman, to his credit, avoids a long 'drugs are bad' speech (one can only dread what Akshay Kumar would do with a film like this). Instead, he elects to lecture the only female officer in the story, bizarrely adapting his own line from an old Mountain Dew commercial. "Daar ke agey zindagi hai," she chides him back, as Disha Patani beckons offscreen. At the police station, one of Rana's men is shown footage from an earlier fight. "Ek dum video-game jaisa!" the man grins. "Like a video-game!" Even by the childish standards of Prabhudheva's style — road chases, a car springing up to catch a fleeing chopper — this is insanely offensive. Not only does the director need to watch better films, he needs to play better games.

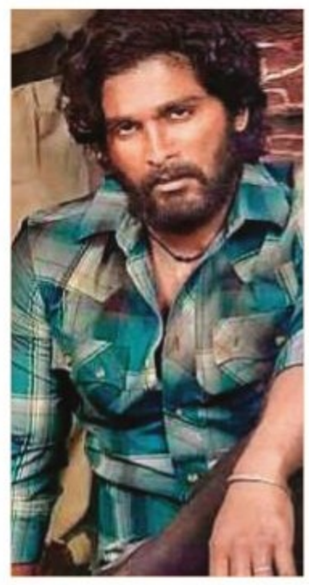
RADHE: YOUR MOST WANTED BHAI

Director: Prabhudheva

Cast: Salman Khan, Disha Patani, Jackie Shroff, Randeep Hooda

Streaming on: ZEE PLEX

RATING 1.5/5



Allu Arjun's Pushpa to be released in two parts

CE FEATURES

ALLU Arjun's pan-Indian film, *Pushpa*, will be released in two parts. The news had been doing rounds on the internet for a while and has now been confirmed officially by the film's production house Mythri Movie Makers.

The team has stated that the decision was made because of the expansive storyline. Producers Naveen Yerneni and Y. Ravi Shankar of Mythri Movie Makers, in a statement, said, "The storyline and the characters took on lives of their own and grew to a span that required the movie to be released in two parts."

They added that the response to the Introduction To Pushpa Raj video encouraged them to go ahead with the call. "We have the best stars, artists and technicians aboard and we hope to give the audience a memorable experience in the theatres through this story."

The film's shooting was halted recently after Allu Arjun tested positive for COVID-19. With a portion of the film left to be shot, *Pushpa*: Part 1 is slated for release on August 13 this year. The second part of the frranchise has been announced as a 2022 release.

Also featuring Rashmika Mandanna, Fahadh Faasil, and Anasuya Bharadwaj in pivotal roles, *Pushpa* has music by Devi Sri Prasad. The Sukumar directorial will be released in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada, and Malayalam.

An unsatisfying jumble of genre tropes

SUDHIR SRINIVASAN

THERE'S a scene in *Woman in the Window* that has accomplished actors, Gary Oldman and Amy Adams, facing each other, engaged in a bickering battle. It's a scene that ought to explode with tension, but all it evokes is amusement. Gary Oldman channels the melodramatic Sirius Black in him, while Amy Adams appears to be desperately trying to draw from a dry well of character description. This one scene, overdramatic in treatment, hammy in performance, ungainly in execution, is a fitting microcosm of the mediocrity that infects this entire film, an adaptation of AJ Finn's passable novel, Woman in the Window.

RATING 2/5

Where the novel offers reasonable levels of genre pleasure, including all the red herrings and misdirection, the film, with its duration of an hour and forty minutes, simply seems to lack the patience needed to set up the environment in a way that does not seem manipulative. Where the novel delivers a fairly immersive experience of what it must feel like to be in the shoes of Anna Fox (Amy Adams), the lonely woman shut inside a decrepit townhouse, the film feels like it can't wait to fling a series of mandatory character introduction snapshots, so it can move on. This has the effect of making you absorb all the developments from a distance—I suppose, like Anna does in her life.

Anna, we learn, is getting by on pills and wine, and furthermore, suffers from agoraphobia (an anxiety disorder that renders her unable to step out of her home). In the Covid-affected world we are prisoners of, it's a condition that I dare say all of us can relate to. The difference, of course, is how she shares nothing of our desperation to get out. It's a condition that is discussed in the book in detail, which helps paint quite an evocative picture of the distress Anna undergoes when she considers stepping out. A quick shot in *Woman in the Window* establishes that even the simple decision of opening a door extracts a big toll out of her, but when she does get forced to step out in this film, her experience doesn't feel as terrorising as it should. The condition feels reduced to a gimmick, and frankly, this can be said of the plot twists in this film as well.

Anna is shown to show much interest in cinema (and as we know, when you are shut in, there is little else to do), and so, the film uses this to pay homage to some obvious influences. Rear Window's James Stewart is referenced, for, Anna too, like him, uses her camera to zoom into the houses of her neighbours, who despite being aware of her proclivity for snooping, never seem to want to shut their drapes. And there's, of course, the ubiquitous Unreliable Narrator™ trope that seems mandatory in thrillers that have a female protagonist. From classics like Rosemary's Baby to the recent Girl on the Train, the women at the centre have had a hard time getting people to believe their truth. However, where meaningful stories and powerful cinema succeed in creating emotional involvement with the protagonist, Woman in the Window feels like a cold dish served straight from the refrigerator. The ingredients are all there, as is the dish, but there's no warmth, there's no taste.

Perhaps the film is aware of this, and perhaps that's why it resorts to strange flourishes in style that seem to come out of nowhere, like the designer splashes of blood when a murder is spotted. The film seems eager to convince you that it is not yet another mediocre thriller on Netflix. Amy Adams seems convinced it isn't. The decision to rope in the who's who of Hollywood talent, including Julianne Moore, Anthony Mackie and Jennifer Jason Leigh, seems born out of this conviction too. And yet, while the cast may be grade A, the quality of this thriller struggles to rise above B.

WOMAN IN THE WINDOW

Director: Joe Wright

Cast: Amy Adams, Gary Oldman, Julianne Moore

Streaming on: NETFLIX